Universi
South
Libr

Richard Beswick
June 15th 1852

MARTYRDOM OF LORD COBHAM.

MARTYROLOGIA;

OR,

RECORDS OF RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION:

BEING

A NEW AND COMPREHENSIVE

BOOK OF MARTYRS,

OF ANCIENT AND MODERN TIMES.

COMPILED PARTLY FROM

THE ACTS AND MONUMENTS OF JOHN FOXE,

AND PARTLY FROM OTHER

GENUINE AND AUTHENTIC DOCUMENTS,

PRINTED AND IN MANUSCRIPT.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
PUBLISHED BY JOHN MASON, 14, CITY-ROAD;
SOLD AT 66, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1849.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY JAMES NICHOLS,
HOXTON-SQUARE.

Stack
Anne
5
063
081
V. 2

CONTENTS.

BOOK IV.

PERSECUTIONS WHICH TOOK PLACE FROM THE CLOSE OF THE FIRST TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE FOURTH CENTURY.

CHAPTER VIII.

Page.

Moral Courage in the Martyrs—Martyrdom of Cyrillus—Of Faustus—Martyrs in Palestine—In Carthage—Martyrdom of Fructuosus—Apparent Authenticity of the Narrative of Fructuosus—Beneficiarii—Case of Sapricius and Nicephorus—Sapricius is tortured—And apostatizes—Nicephorus suffers—Remarks on this Case—Milner the Historian—The Fall of Valerian—Principles of the Divine Government—Cruel Edict of Valerian against the Church—He is taken Prisoner—Reduced to servile Slavery—And dies a miserable Death—Lactantius—Unfilial Conduct of Gallienus—Dreadful Condition of the Roman Empire—Pestilence and Earthquakes—Swarm of Usurpers—Their general Character—Testimony of Gibbon—Conduct of Gallienus—Reason of his Edict in Favour of the Christians—Sanguinary Character of Macrianus—Persecution still existing—Neander and Townsend on the term "Religio Licita"—Fall of Macrianus—The Martyrdom of Marinus—Remarks on the Death of the Centurion—Tranquil State of the Church—Death of Gallienus—Zenobia—Ascension of Claudius, and Death—Quintilius—Aurelian, Emperor—His History—His Character—The Sibylline Books—General Tranquillity of the Church—His Treatment of the Christians—Paul of Samosata—Change of his Conduct towards the Church—Cause thereof—History of the Mother of Aurelian—Edict against the Christians—Quinquennalia—Martyrdom of Felix, Bishop of Rome—And of Agapetus—Aurelian undertakes an Expedition to the East—Is assassinated—Lactantius—Tacitus—His Character, and Death—Florianus and Probus—Quietude of the Church—Death of Probus—Carus—Carinus—Numerianus—State of the Christians—Arrius Aper—Death of Numerian—Its suspicious Character—Diocletian proclaimed Emperor—He slays Aper—Anecdote of Diocletian—Progress of Christianity—Theonas, Bishop of Alexandria—Dorotheus—General Decline of Piety in the Church—History and Character of Diocletian—Herculeus raised to the Office of Cæsar—And afterward of Co-Emperor—Diocletian an Enemy to the Christians, and why—Martyrs of this Period—Testimony of Mosheim—Herculeus a Persecutor—Martyrdom of Primus and Felician—Of Marcus and Marcellianus—Of Zoe, Tranquillinus, and others—Tiburtius and Chromatius—Caius, Bishop of Rome—Christianity in the Army of Rome—The Theban Legion—Their Martyrdom—Carausius—Constantius Chlorus and Galerius made Cæsars—Helena, History of—Division of the Government—Martyrdom of Faith, Capricius, and Quintin—Heresy of Manicheism—And of Hierax—Oppression of the Christian Soldiers—Martyrdom of Maximilian—Persecuting Spirit of Diocletian—The Case of Marcellus—Remarks of Gibbon, examined—Cassianus—Galerius an inveterate Enemy of the Church—Character of Constantius Chlorus—Baths of Diocletian—State of the Church—Romula, the Mother of Galerius—Her Character—Active Measures contemplated against the Christians—Diocletian consents to them—His first Edict defined—Martyrdom of Sebastian—The Edict of Diocletian is executed—

2032491

Page.

Nicomedia—Terminalia—Another Edict, and how executed—Arnobius—Conduct of the Christians—Martyrdom of Maximilian—The Edict is torn down—Heroism of the Faithful—Numerous Martyrs—Fire at the Palace—The Persecution is general—Prisca and Valeria are persecuted—Unheard-of Tortures—Vivicomburation—Hierocles—Lactantius—Martyrdom of Vitus, Modestus, and Crescentia—And also of Victor of Marseilles—Aurelius Clemens Prudentius, who he was—Account of Tarachus—Romanus and Eulalia—Political Storms prejudicial to the Church—Martyrdom of Authimus, Bishop of Nicomedia—Of Peter—George and Erasmus—Eusebius—Martyrdom of Agnes—This Persecution depreciated—Persecution in Rome—Marcellinus and others suffer—Persecution in Gaul and Spain—Many suffer—The Persecution extends to Britain—Albanus and others are martyred—Giraldus—Gildas the Historian—Case of Marcellinus, Bishop of Rome—Diocletian in the Capital—Porphyrius—Diocletian publishes another Edict—Persecution in Egypt, and neighbouring Districts—Cyprian, Justina, and other Martyrs—Theonas, Bishop of Alexandria—Agricola martyred—Mensurius of Carthage—Saturninus—Persecution in Syria and Palestine—Numerous Victims—Illness of Diocletian—Case of Apphianus—Edesius—Remarks thereon—Diocletian abdicates—Herculeus follows his Example—Constantius Chlorus and Galerian, Emperors—General Misery of the Empire—Severus and Maximin Cæsars—Character of the latter—Character of Constantius as an Emperor—Council of Cirta—Commemoration of Martyrs—Case of the Lapsed revived—Council of Illiberis—Cruelty of Maximin—Persecution in Egypt revived—It increases in Severity—Christians multiply—Number of Martyrs—Pantaleon, Juletta, and others noticed—Results of Christian Fortitude—The Martyrdom of Phileas—Remarks on Gibbon—Epistle of Phileas—Cruelties in Phrygia, Antioch, Pontus, &c.—Sufferings of Lucian, Procopius, and others—Also of Hesychius, Pachymius, and Theodorus—Meletius—Meletian Schism—Another Edict—Intemperate Rage of Persecutors—Paul, the Bishop of Cirta—Felix of Tibiura—Promising Character of Constantine—Death of Constantius—Character of Maxentius—His Death—Cruelties at Cæsarea—Agapius—Cruelty of Maximin—Death of Severus—Licinius—Alexander—Pamphilus—Persecution again in Palestine and in Egypt—Antony, the Monk—Marcellus, Bishop of Rome—Persecution revived in general—Ferocity of Urbanus—His subsequent Fate—Death of Pamphilus—Quirinus—Continued Cruelty of Maximin—Sufferings of the Christians—Peleus and Nilus, two Egyptian Bishops—Martyrdom at Tyre—Numerous Sufferers—Barbarous Conduct of Firmilian—Arnobius—State of the Church—Illness of Galerius—Edict of Galerius—Jealousy of Maximin—Death of Galerius—Various Plots against the Christians—Number of Martyrs—Maximin—Jealousy of Licinius—Licinius hostile to Christianity—Re-organization of Paganism—The Miletian Schism—Persecution continues in Egypt—Maximin and "Acts of Pilate"—Persecutions perpetrated by Maximin—The Arts and Tyranny of Maximin—Lucianus—Septuagint Version—Doctrines of Lucianus—State of the Church—Death of Lucianus—Refined Cruelties of Maximin—Death of Peter—Distressing State of the Empire—And of the Church—Carthage—The Donatists—Death of Diocletian, and of his Wife—Cæcilianus—Constantine marches to Rome—Vision of the Cross—Victory of Constantine—Edict of Constantine—His Conversion—War between Maximin and Licinius—Licinius defeats Maximin—Maximin retracts his persecuting Edicts—Death of Maximin—Edicts of Constantine—His Character—Constantine supports Cæcilian—Donatists defeated—Progress of Christianity—Persecution in Persia—Conversion of the Empire—Offensive Movements of Licinius—Fall of the New Paganism—Rebuilding of the Church at Tyre—Remarks 1

BOOK V.

PERSECUTIONS WHICH TOOK PLACE FROM THE ACCESSION OF CONSTANTINE THE GREAT, TO THE DEATH OF JOHN WYCLIFFE, THE MORNING-STAR OF THE REFORMATION.

CHAPTER I.

Page.

The general Aspect of Society—Insidious Introduction of Error and Corruption in the Church—Constantine assumes the Title of Pontifex Maximus—Severe Enactments against the Jews—Death by Fire—Retributive Providence exercised on the Jewish People—Effects of a Departure from Christian Simplicity—Evils resulting from worldly Associations—Arius, anterior to the Nicæan Council—Progress of the Arian Heresy—Christian Churches in Rome—Persecution of the Donatists—The Eastern Part of the World still Pagan—The Christian Hierarchy and the Pagan Priesthood contrasted—Martyrdom of Blaise, Bishop of Sebaste—Circumcelliones—Their Extravagancies—Strong Passion for Martyrdom—Constantine strives zealously to promote Peace—Fatality of false Peace—On the Administration of the Christian Community—Effect of the imperial Authority—Its deleterious Tendency—Objects contemplated in the early Synods of the Church—Alleged Cause for assembling the First General Council—Œcumenical Councils—Assembly of the Council of Nice—By whom it was composed—Where it was convened—Is opened by Constantine—Splendour of his Appearance—Vain Attempts of certain Gentile Philosophers—Their Conversion—The Nicene Creed—The Homoousian Faith—Remarks on Newman's History of the Arians—Arius is deposed and banished—Constantia is inclined to Arianism—The vacillating Temper of the Emperor—Reports affecting his moral Character—Arius is restored—Eusebius, Bishop of Nicomedia—Arian Bishops recalled from Exile—Who become Oppressors—Eustathius—His Character foully calumniated—Considerable national Commotion—Athanasius—His Rise—The Emperor commands the Reception of Arius in the Church—It is disregarded—State of the Church—Heavy Crimes attributed by the Arians to Athanasius—Arsenius—Synod summoned to investigate Complaints against Athanasius—Base Conduct of the Arians—Anecdote recorded by Theodoret—Further Persecution of Athanasius by the Arians—Proceedings at Tyre—Banishment of Athanasius—Interview with the Emperor—Numerous Acts of Oppression and Persecution by the Arians—Dissimulation of Arius, and Weakness of Constantine, who insists on Arius being admitted into the Church—Pious and exemplary Conduct of Alexander—Awful Death of Arius—Remarks on his Character—Position of the Church at this Period—Ecclesiastical Canons made Law of the Empire—Heresy considered a criminal Act—The Power of the Emperors yields to the Church—All Parties indulge in gross Acts of Intolerance—The Council of Gangra—Its Character—Apostolical Constitutions—Their intrinsic Value—Foundation of Constantinople—Erection of this City favourable to Christianity—Ceremonial of the Foundation—Dimensions of the City—William of Malmsbury quoted—Basilicas—Conduct of Constantine—Maimbourg quoted—Socrates—Sozomen—Theodoret—Philostorgius—Epiphanius—Hilary—Ruffinus—Sulpicius Severus—Constantine puts Crispus, his Son, to Death—His professed Repentance for this rash Act—Tragic End of Fausta—The Illness, Death, and Funeral of Constantine—His Character—How far was he a Christian—His Baptism, why delayed—Sanguinary Massacre of the Princes—Prospects of the Church—Paganism how far suppressed—Persia, its Condition—Tiridates—His Death—Agitated State

Page.

of Affairs in Armenia—Severe Persecutions inflicted on the Christians—Constantius makes War against Persia—Battle of Singara—And the Siege of Nisibis 193

CHAPTER II.

Effect of the Contests between Rome and Persia upon the Church—Intolerance of the Magi—Their History and Character—Zoroaster—Zendavista—Armenia, the first Christian Country—By whom Christianity was introduced—Struggles and Persecution with which it had to contend—Tiridates—Gregory the Apostle of Armenia, and his Successors—Persian Persecution—Sapor—Simeon, Archbishop of Seleucia—His Character—Martyrdom of Usthazares—Of Simeon—Numerous Sufferers—Martyrdom of Pusicius—Persecution increases—Maruthas—Tarbula and others martyred—Martyrdom of Acepsimas, Joseph, and Aithalas—Multitude of Martyrs and Confessors—Bardemus suffers—Case of Narses—Commemoration of Martyrs—Martyrdom of Milles—Effect of these Persecutions—Buoyant Spirit of Christianity—State of the Church—Religious Character of the Sons of Constantine—Death of Eusebius the Historian—And of Alexander, Bishop of Constantinople—Paul his Successor—His Character and untimely End—Altered State of Discipline in the Church—Macedonius and Macedonians—Deposition of Athanasius—Gregory of Cappadocia—Philagrius—Persecuting Acts of Gregory—Athanasius flies to Rome—Sufferings of Potamo—Address of Athanasius to the Orthodox—Remarks of Milner the Historian—Eusebius of Nicomedia translated to Constantinople—His Character—Hermogenes is killed in a Tumult—Constans and Constantius contrasted—Council of Sardica—Proceedings of—Its Objects were frustrated—Hosius of Corduba—Disastrous Appearance of the Church—Council of Milan in 347—Photinus condemned—Pretended Recantation of Ursaces and Valens—Feigned Reconciliation of Constantius with Athanasius—Its gross Inconsistency—Athanasius is restored to Alexandria—Onager—Deposition of Stephen the Arian—Persian War—The Admonitions of Constans—Success of the Arms of Constantius—Want of Talent in Constans—Magnentius—Conspiracy against Constans—Magnentius assumes the Purple—And Constans is slain—Constantius refuses to treat with the Usurper—Engages in a severe Contest, which ends in the Defeat of Magnentius, who ultimately falls on his Sword—The Mask is now discarded by Constantius—Athanasius considered a personal Enemy to the Emperor—Distressed State of the Church—Synods of Arles and Milan—Persecution by the Arians—Effects following the late Restoration of Athanasius—Marcellus—The Sabellians and Arians—Athanasius flies to Rome—And other Prelates are banished—Some Bishops were slain or cruelly treated—George, the Arian Bishop of Alexandria—His fearful persecuting Acts—Cruel Treatment of the Exiles—Tragic Scenes on a "Trinity Sunday"—Persecution in Alexandria—Account of Secundus, a Priest—Orthodox Prelates of Egypt and Libya banished—Death of Paul referred to—Triumph of Macedonius—Weakness of Constantius—Baneful Influence of Prosperity—Council of Milan—Lucifer, Bishop of Cagliari—Eusebius, Bishop of Vercellæ—Hilary the Deacon is scourged—Liberius, Bishop of Rome—Is summoned to Milan—His Interview with Constantius—Liberius is banished—Felix supersedes him in his See—Drooping State of the Church illustrated in the Defection of Liberius—And also of Hosius, Bishop of Corduba—Extract from one of his Epistles—Continued Privations of Athanasius—His Address to Dracontius—Constantius resorts to Violence—Cathedral of Alexandria invested by Soldiers—In the Confusion the Prelate escapes—Flees among the Monks and Hermits of the Desert—Who protect him—Many Treatises written during this Retreat—Insolence of Paganism—George of Cappadocia—Cruelties perpetrated

Page.

by him—Milner quoted—Projected Union of the Orthodox and Novatian Churches—Which proved abortive—Eusebius of Vercellæ—Persecution increases—The Novatians suffer—Character of Novatianism—Zeal displayed in favour of Christianity—Admonitory Case of Hosius—Treatment he underwent from Constantius—Defection of Hosius—Triumph of the Arians—Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers—Death of Hosius—Council at Ariminum—Meletius, Bishop of Antioch—Is subsequently banished—Euzoius—Eustathians—Melancholy Condition of the Church—Value of Creeds—The Athanasian Controversy prepared the Way for the Church at Rome to assume the Supremacy—Arianism continues in the Ascendant—Felix the elect Bishop of Rome—Hilary on the State of the Church—Council of Seleucia—And of Ariminum—The Orthodox Faith was recognised by the latter—The Machinations and Intrigues of the Arians afterward prevailed—The Synod of Seleucia—Arianism triumphant—Aetius—Eunomians—Macedonius—Eudoxus—The Christian World in Confusion—Miserable Policy of the Emperor—The Persian War—Illness and Death of Constantius—Accession of Julian to the Throne—His Character—Throws the Shield of Protection over Paganism—Which he openly encourages—Policy of his Attempts against the Christian Faith—Athanasius—Previous Career of Julian—Townsend's Remarks on Gibbon—Julian's Attempts to abolish the Name of Christian—Cause of his Dislike to it—Numerous Restrictions inflicted on the Christians—Early Education of Julian seriously defective—The Conduct of Constantius towards him—Whose general Behaviour tended to excite Disgust in the Mind of Julian—The Influence upon him of the Death of Gallus—Effects of the Death of Constantius upon Julian—The unchristian Christianity of the late Emperor—Julian restores Paganism—His indomitable Hatred of Constantine—General Character of Julian—Prosperity of Heathenism—Julian's Mode of Attack on Christianity—Schemes of philosophical Infidels—Ridicule a Weapon in the Hands of the Heathen—Policy of Julian—Professes to abstain from open Persecution—Treatment of the Bishops and inferior Clergy—Vigilant Malice of Julian—Projects the rebuilding of the Temple—Insurmountable Obstacles to its accomplishment—Suppression of Learning among the Christians—The ensnaring Artifices of Julian—Martyrdom of Juventinus and Maximinus—Degradation of Cæsarea—Maris, Bishop of Chalcedon—Julian attempts to seduce the Followers of Christ—Sufferings of the Presbyter Basil—His Fidelity and Zeal—His Courage and Fortitude—Tortures inflicted by Julian on Basil—Frumentius—Who adds to the Torments—Under which Basil expires—Martyrdom of Gordian—Of John and Paul—Artemius—Cassian—Bonosus and Maximilian—Bibiana—Marcus, Bishop of Arethusa—Many Martyrs—Cæsarius—Persecutions at Merum—Julian visits Antioch—Death of George of Alexandria—Arianism—Lucifer of Cagliari—Fate of Athanasius—The Persian War—Martyrdom of Theodore—Council of Alexandria—Efforts still made to restore Paganism—Persecutions of Julian—Treatment of the Christians—Removal of Babylas—Temple of Apollo burnt—Profanity of Julian—Miracles—Character of Julian—Publia—Death of Julian—Julian an Author—Remarks on his Decease... 247

CHAPTER III.

Accession of Jovian—General Exultation—His Character—Favours the Interests of the Church—Paganism is at a Discount—Proceedings of the Arians, Donatists, and Novatians—General Toleration—The Standard of the Cross is replaced—Intolerant Proceeding of Magnus rebuked and punished—Athanasius re-appears in Alexandria—Is addressed in an Epistle by Jovian—Who invites him to resume the See of Alexandria—Which is offensive to the Arians—A Deputation wait upon Jovian—

Page.

Who remains firm—Death of Jovian—Is succeeded by Valentinian—Who associates Valens with him in the Empire—Character of both—Valens ranks among the Orthodox—But is led by Eudoxius, Bishop of Constantinople, to the Side of Arianism—Valentinian is tolerant—Ammianus Marcellinus—Paganism is tolerated—Valens is zealous for Arianism—And persecutes the Orthodox—Prelates are exiled—Barbarities at Antioch—Murder of eighty Ministers—Modestus a Tool of Valens—Rev. H. H. Milman—Savage Ferocity of Valentinian—His Death—Valens again expels the orthodox Prelates from the Churches—Athanasius again flees—The See is filled by Lucius, a Usurper—Death of Procopius—Heroism of numerous Martyrs—Death of Athanasius—Nominates his Successor—Prepares the Way for further Persecution—Peter, the orthodox Successor of Athanasius, is imprisoned—And exiled—Euzoius—Tumult in Alexandria—Lucius attacks the Monasteries—Pantonius—Heraclides—Persecution of the Monks—Macarius—Lucius installed by the Help of the Sword—Cruelty of Magnus—And of Palladius—Numerous Monks sent to the Mines—The Goths—Athanaric—Fritigern—Sufferings of Sabas—His Character—Intolerant Proceedings of Athanaric—Unflinching Integrity of Sabas—Persecution increases—Sansala, a Fellow-Sufferer—Atharides—Sabas is tortured—And relieved by a Pagan Woman—Martyrdom of Sabas—Idolatry and Superstition of the Goths—Nicetas—Bitter Hatred of Athanaric—Numerous Attempts to induce Apostacy—A "noble Army of Martyrs" among the Sufferers of this Period—Valens approaching a Crisis in his Career—Influence of Christianity on the Barbarism of the Age—The Gothic Invasion—Salutary Effects of the Christian Clergy—Basil—Interview of Valens—Efforts of Modestus to shake the Fidelity of the Prelate—Valens succumbs to the Bishop, and presents an Oblation to the Poor—Piety of Terentius—Many Christians murdered amongst the Goths—Eusebius of Samosata—A powerful Adversary of Arianism—His Care of the Church—Machinations of the Arians—An Instance of his Firmness—Council at Antioch—In Disguise he makes the Tour of Syria—Continually frustrates the Schemes of the Arians—Eusebius is banished into Thrace—Perilous Situation of the Messenger—Escapes privately into Exile—Uproar in Samosata—Corresponds with Gregory Nazianzen—And with Basil—Character of Eunomius—Gregory Nyssen—Eunomius is superseded by Lucius—His violent Temper—Evolcius and Antiochus are banished—Paulinus—Defence of Eusebius and Meletius—Peter of Alexandria—Warlike Movements in Thrace—Valens marches against the Goths—He restores the exiled Bishops—Death of Eusebius—His Charity—Progress of the Goths—History of their Movements—Theophilus at the Council of Nice—Ulphilas, Character of—The Goths embrace Christianity—And Arianism—Death of Valens—Succeeded by Gratian—Valentinian the Younger—Theodosius—Murder of Gratian—Ambrose—Rebellion of Maximus—Justina—Ambrose commanded to resign the Churches of Milan—Refuses—And is persecuted by Justina—Valentinian II. dies—Critical Period of Church History—Canons of the Church, part of the civil Law—Priscillian—Persecution and Death of Priscillian—The first Martyr to sectarian Opinions—Theodosius—His Baptism—His intolerant Manifesto—Councils and Emperors govern the Church—Ambrose—Sanguinary Conduct of Theodosius—Bold Conduct of Ambrose—Penitence of the Emperor—Successfully pleads for the Pardon of an Offender—Epiphanius—His Character—His supposed Miracles—Œcumenical Council of Constantinople—Maximus—Canons of the Council—Heresies—Theodosius makes a determined Attack on Paganism—Desecration and Destruction of Pagan Temples—Marcellus, Bishop of Apamea—Temple of Jupiter—Martyrdom of Marcellus—Olympus—Temple of Serapis destroyed—And the colossal Statue of Serapis—Acacius, Bishop of Berea—Numerous Heresies—Martyrdom of Heretics—Donatists—Theodosius, Edicts of—Veneration for Martyrs

Page.

—Death of Theodosius—Pelagius—Honorius—Semi-Pelagianism—Origin of Nestorianism—Cessation of the Agapæ—Doctrines of the Nestorians —Repartees of Sisinius—John Chrysostom—Christianity compromised—Corruption of Manners—Troubles of the Empire—State of the Church —Council of Carthage—Persecution in Persia—Several Prelates deposed —Persecution of a Deaconess—Chrysostom condemned—Character of Innocent—Statue of the Empress—Testimony of Prudentius—Tumult in the Church—Gladiatorial Games prohibited—Death of Chrysostom—Worship of Martyrs—Theodosius the Younger—Pulcheria—Relics of Martyrs—Death of Stilicho—Alaric takes Rome—Vigilantius—Donatists at Carthage—Theophilus, Bishop of Alexandria—Martin of Tours—Progress of Superstition—Martin in the Army—First Monastery in France—His Fanaticism—And Miracles imputed to him—Sulpitius—Pagan Rites introduced—Doubtful Character of Proselytes—Credulity of Sulpitius—Examples—Saint-Worship of Paulinus—Jerome—Early Career of—Character of—Bethlehem—Monastic Institutions—Birth-Place of Vigilantius—Marvellous Tales—His Principles in Danger—Propagation of Falsehoods—Difficulty of studying Scripture—Vigilantius ordained—Abuse of the fourth Century—Apostolical Authority—Vigilantius at Bethlehem—Cradle—Desecration—Extravagant Notions of Celibacy—Vigilantius in the Cottian Alps—Connexion between him and the Waldenses—Gospel professed in the Cottian Alps—Vigilantius condemns numerous Errors—Perished in the Massacre of Barcelona—Dr. Henderson—Jerome—Theodosian Code established—Definition of Heresy—Laws against—Term "Inquisitor" first used—Final Effort of Paganism —Character of Leo—Aggrandizement of the Roman See—Private Confession—Genseric upon Carthage—Heresy of Eutyches—Councils of Constantinople, Chalcedon, and Ephesus—Vandal Persecution—Martyrdom of Armogastus—Death of Valentinian III.—Numerous Sects—Arians strengthen Rome—Power of the Church—Christianity extends—Edicts against Heresy—Code of Theodosius—Code of Justinian 334

CHAPTER IV.

Not all the Slain are Martyrs—Confusion of the Secular and the Spiritual—The Britons—Persecution in Armenia, and religious War—Renewed Persecution in Africa—Massacre of Christians in Arabia—War between Justinian and Chosroes—The Lombards—Hermenegild, the Rebel, canonized—Chosroes II. takes Jerusalem—The Mussulmans also take Jerusalem—Constantine-Sylvanus and the Paulicians—Phocas and Boniface III.—The Monks of Bangor—State of Europe in the EIGHTH Century—Persecution in the East—In Spain—Gotteschalchus—State of the Church in the NINTH Century—Claudius of Turin—Pseudo-Martyrs of the TENTH Century—Adalbert of Prague—Sylvester II.—Canons of Orleans—Christianity rejected in Hungary—Ordeals—Propagandists of the ELEVENTH Century—First Crusade—England—Hakem, Father of the Druses—Intellectual Movement in the TWELFTH Century—Speculations —Foulques de Neuilly—Heretics—Conduct of the Church towards Heretics—Albigenses—Councils of Lateran and Verona—Judgment of an enlightened Romanist respecting the Persecutions of those Times—Jews —Resistance to Ecclesiastical Power—Second Crusade—Third Crusade —Fourth Crusade—Military Orders—Condition of Christians in the East—Waldo and the Waldenses—Prohibition of Prayer in vernacular Languages 432

CHAPTER V.

Page.

THE THIRTEENTH Century characterized—SIXTH, SEVENTH, and EIGHTH Crusades to the Holy Land and Egypt—Fall of the Latin Kingdom in the East—Fruitless Negotiations between the Latin, Greek, and Roman Churches—Crusades against reputed Heretics in France and Spain—Spanish Preachers in Africa—Crusades against Pagans in Livonia and Prussia—Political and religious Opponents of the Papacy persecuted throughout Europe—State of England, Scotland, and Ireland—Jubilees invented—Series of Events in the FOURTEENTH Century—Quarrels and Schism of the Papacy—Monasticism—Disaffection of the Laity—State of Society—Persecutions in Italy—Germany—France—England—Wycliffe and the Lollards—Conclusion 527

MARTYROLOGIA,

&c.

BOOK IV.

PERSECUTIONS WHICH TOOK PLACE FROM THE CLOSE OF THE FIRST TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE FOURTH CENTURY.

CHAPTER VIII.

Moral Courage in the Martyrs—Martyrdom of Cyrillus—Of Faustus—Martyrs in Palestine—In Carthage—Martyrdom of Fructuosus—Apparent Authenticity of the Narrative of Fructuosus—Beneficiarii—Case of Sapricius and Nicephorus—Sapricius is tortured—And apostatizes—Nicephorus suffers—Remarks on this Case—Milner the Historian—The Fall of Valerian—Principles of the Divine Government—Cruel Edict of Valerian against the Church—He is taken Prisoner—Reduced to servile Slavery—And dies a miserable Death—Lactantius—Unfilial Conduct of Gallienus—Dreadful Condition of the Roman Empire—Pestilence and Earthquakes—Swarm of Usurpers—Their general Character—Testimony of Gibbon—Conduct of Gallienus—Reason of his Edict in Favour of the Christians—Sanguinary Character of Macrianus—Persecution still existing—Neander and Townsend on the term "Religio Licita"—Fall of Macrianus—The Martyrdom of Marinus—Remarks on the Death of the Centurion—Tranquil State of the Church—Death of Gallienus—Zenobia—Ascension of Claudius, and Death—Quintilius—Aurelian, Emperor—His History—His Character—The Sibylline Books—General Tranquillity of the Church—His Treatment of the Christians—Paul of Samosata—Change of his Conduct towards the Church—Cause thereof—History of the Mother of Aurelian—Edict against the Christians—Quinquennalia—Martyrdom of Felix, Bishop of Rome—And of Agapetus—Aurelian undertakes an Expedition to the East—Is assassinated—Lactantius—Tacitus—His Character, and Death—Florianus and Probus—Quietude of the Church—Death of Probus—Carus—Carinus—Numerianus—State of the Christians—Arrius Aper—Death of Numerian—Its suspicious Character—Diocletian proclaimed Emperor—He slays Aper—Anecdote of Diocletian—Progress of Christianity—Theonas, Bishop of Alexandria—Dorotheus—General Decline of Piety in the Church—History and Character of Diocletian—Herculeus raised to the Office of Cæsar—And afterward of Co-Emperor—Diocletian an Enemy to the Christians, and why—Martyrs of this Period—Testimony of Mosheim—Herculeus a Persecutor—Martyrdom of Primus and Felician—Of Marcus and Marcellianus—Of Zoe, Tranquillinus, and others—Tiburtius and Chromatius—Caius, Bishop of Rome—Christianity in the Army of Rome—The Theban Legion—Their Martyrdom—Carausius—Constantius Chlorus and Galerius made Cæsars—Helena, History of—Division of the Government—Mar-

tyrdom of Faith, Capracius, and Quintin—Heresy of Manicheism—And of Hierax—Oppression of the Christian Soldiers—Martyrdom of Maximilian—Persecuting Spirit of Diocletian—The Case of Marcellus—Remarks of Gibbon, examined—Cassianus—Galerius an inveterate Enemy of the Church—Character of Constantius Chlorus—Baths of Diocletian—State of the Church—Romula, the Mother of Galerius—Her Character—Active Measures contemplated against the Christians—Diocletian consents to them—His first Edict defined—Martyrdom of Sebastian—The Edict of Diocletian is executed—Nicomedia—Terminalia—Another Edict, and how executed—Arnobius—Conduct of the Christians—Martyrdom of Maximilian—The Edict is torn down—Heroism of the Faithful—Numerous Martyrs—Fire at the Palace—The Persecution is general—Prisca and Valeria are persecuted—Unheard-of Tortures—Vivicomburation—Hierocles—Lactantius—Martyrdom of Vitus, Modestus, and Crescentia—And also of Victor of Marseilles—Aurelius Clemens Prudentius, who he was—Account of Tarachus—Romanus and Eulalia—Political Storms prejudicial to the Church—Martyrdom of Authimus, Bishop of Nicomedia—Of Peter—George and Erasmus—Eusebius—Martyrdom of Agnes—This Persecution depreciated—Persecution in Rome—Marcellinus and others suffer—Persecution in Gaul and Spain—Many suffer—The Persecution extends to Britain—Albanus and others are martyred—Giraldus—Gildas the Historian—Case of Marcellinus, Bishop of Rome—Diocletian in the Capital—Porphyrius—Diocletian publishes another Edict—Persecution in Egypt, and neighbouring Districts—Cyprian, Justina, and other Martyrs—Theonas, Bishop of Alexandria—Agricola martyred—Mensurius of Carthage—Saturninus—Persecution in Syria and Palestine—Numerous Victims—Illness of Diocletian—Case of Apphianus Edesius—Remarks thereon—Diocletian abdicates—Herculeus follows his Example—Constantius Chlorus and Galerian, Emperors—General Misery of the Empire—Severus and Maximin Cæsars—Character of the latter—Character of Constantius as an Emperor—Council of Cirta—Commemoration of Martyrs—Case of the Lapsed revived—Council of Illiberis—Cruelty of Maximin—Persecution in Egypt revived—It increases in Severity—Christians multiply—Number of Martyrs—Puntaleon, Juletta, and others noticed—Results of Christian Fortitude—The Martyrdom of Phileas—Remarks on Gibbon—Epistle of Phileas—Cruelties in Phrygia, Antioch, Pontus, &c.—Sufferings of Lucian, Procopius, and others—Also of Hesychius, Pachymius, and Theodorus—Meletius—Meletian Schism—Another Edict—Intemperate Rage of Persecutors—Paul, the Bishop of Cirta—Felix of Tibiura—Promising Character of Constantine—Death of Constantius—Character of Maxentius—His Death—Cruelties at Cæsarea—Agapius—Cruelty of Maximin—Death of Severus—Licinius—Alexander—Pamphilus—Persecution again in Palestine and in Egypt—Antony, the Monk—Marcellus, Bishop of Rome—Persecution revived in general—Ferocity of Urbanus—His subsequent Fate—Death of Pamphilus—Quirinus—Continued Cruelty of Maximin—Sufferings of the Christians—Peleus and Nilus, two Egyptian Bishops—Martyrdom at Tyre—Numerous Sufferers—Barbarous Conduct of Firmilian—Arnobius—State of the Church—Illness of Galerius—Edict of Galerius—Jealousy of Maximin—Death of Galerius—Various Plots against the Christians—Number of Martyrs—Maximin—Jealousy of Licinius—Licinius hostile to Christianity—Re-organization of Paganism—The Miletian Schism—Persecution continues in Egypt—Maximin and "Acts of Pilate"—Persecutions perpetrated by Maximin—The Arts and Tyranny of Maximin—Lucianus—Septuagint Version—Doctrines of Lucianus—State of the Church—Death of Lucianus—Refined Cruelties of Maximin—Death of Peter—Distressing State of the Empire—And of the Church—Carthage—The Donatists—Death of Diocletian, and of his Wife—Cæcilianus—Constantine marches to Rome—Vision of the Cross—Victory of Constantine—Edict of Constantine—His Conversion—War between Maximin and Licinius—Licinius defeats Maximin—Maximin retracts his persecuting Edicts—Death of Maximin—Edicts of Constantine—His Character—Constantine supports Cæcilian—Donatists defeated—Pro-

gress of Christianity—Persecution in Persia—Conversion of the Empire—Offensive Movements of Licinius—Fall of the New Paganism—Rebuilding of the Church at Tyre—Remarks.

Persecution still raged. It is, however, an interesting fact, that nearly as many examples exist of females suffering nobly for the cause of Christ, and triumphing gloriously, as of men. The instances of such fortitude are not confined to persons of mature age: youths far below the age of manhood have been known to expose themselves to the peril of death, for the purpose of expressing their entire devotion to the truth they had embraced. A circumstance of this nature is related in the history of the period of which we are writing, which illustrates this fact in a very striking manner. A lad named Cyrillus having been converted to Christianity, his father drove him from his house, and left him exposed to starvation: he was at length apprehended, and taken before the Magistrate, who endeavoured by his threats to terrify him into a recantation. But the youthful confessor remained firm to his purpose; and when the Judge changed his tone, and said mildly, that, if he would repent of his error, his father would take him home again, and give him all he could desire, he replied, that he rejoiced at being driven from his home to suffer for the honour of God; that he should quickly inhabit a nobler and happier mansion than that which he had lost; and that he should not fear to die, to obtain a better life. The Magistrate himself was moved at seeing one so young so unbending in his profession, and determined to save him from the punishment to which an older Christian would have been condemned without delay. Desirous, however, of making him recant, if possible, he ordered him to be bound, and carried to execution; but neither the appearance of the fire, nor the preparations made to expose him to its flames, had any effect upon his mind, and he was led back to the tribunal. The Judge again addressed him in the gentle voice of persuasion; but it was as unavailing as before; and Cyrillus said, with firmness, "You have done me great wrong in bringing me back: I fear not your fire; I shall pass through it to an infinitely more excellent habitation than any I could enjoy upon earth." Few of those most accustomed to even the scenes of misery which took place during persecutions, could refrain from tears as they heard him thus express himself, in a voice, the firmness of which was in singular contrast with its boyish tones. But the extraordinary magnanimity which he exhibited had no permanent effect on his Judge; for soon after uttering the words above mentioned, he was again led to execution, and put to death.*

A "cloud of witnesses," at this period, suffered in the cause of Christ, of whom mention only needs be made. Faustus, an aged man, was beheaded. At Cæsarea, in Palestine, there were martyred, Priscus, Malchus, and Alexander; who, dwelling in the country, had witnessed the effects of the fortitude of the Christians, were grieved at their own supineness and negligence with regard to the

* Fleury, Hist. Eccles., liv. vii., sect. 49, Nismes, 8vo. edit., p. 613, 1779; Stebbing, History of the Christian Church, vol. i., p. 118.

cause of Christianity, and, consulting with each other, they came voluntarily to the city, and stood before the Governor, declared themselves to be Christians, and suffered accordingly. The city of Carthage was in no degree free from renewed exhibitions of the tyrant's power, especially if the "Speculum Historiale Vincentii" is to be credited, where mention is made of not less than three hundred martyrs. We are told, that the Proconsul placed before them coals and incense, adjoining a limekiln, in order to sacrifice to Jupiter, and, in case of refusal, to throw themselves into the burning furnace; on which they simultaneously embraced that death to which they had been doomed. The same writer also testifies, that in the city of Tuburbo, in Africa, were three ladies of the names of Maxima, Donatilla, and Secunda, who, in the persecution of Valerian and Gallienus, first had given them for their drink vinegar and gall, then they were whipped with the scourge, then tortured upon the rack, and rubbed with lime; after that they were scorched upon the gridiron, and then thrown to the wild beasts; and as these refused to approach them, the confessors were beheaded. Mention is also made of Pontius, who was arrested at Cimele, a small city, now in a state of dilapidation, in the neighbourhood of Nice, in Sardinia, at the direction of Claudius, the Prefect: he was first placed on the rack, then he was thrown to the wild beasts, and afterward committed to the flames; having emerged from these torturing scenes unhurt, he was beheaded by the river-side, and then thrown into the stream. Zeno, the Bishop of Verona, is said, also, in the same persecution, to have sustained martyrdom. Others, also, at Carthage laid down their lives for the faith, particularly Lucius, Montanus, Flavian, Julian, Victoricus, Primolus, Remus, and Donatian, most of whom were Clergy, and the disciples of Cyprian.

Aurelius Prudentius, in his work entitled, "Peristephanon," or "The Crowns of Martyrs," mentions Fructuosus, the Bishop of Tarragona, in Spain, who, with his Deacons, suffered martyrdom during the reign of Valerian and his son Gallienus, and under the consulate of Æmilian and Bassus.* Fructuosus was in bed when the

* Lord Hailes, (Sir David Dalrymple,) to whose translation of the account of Fructuosus we are much indebted, does not hesitate to say, that the narrative of the trial and execution of Fructuosus and his two Deacons has various marks of authenticity which seem to distinguish it from others of the like nature, too hastily admitted as genuine. 1. The time is mentioned in such a manner as not to be inconsistent with history; and the place, although not mentioned in the manuscript here used, is to be learned from a manuscript quoted by Valesius. (Ad Euseb., lib. ix., cap. 9.) "Æmilianus Præses, adveniens in civitatem *Tarraconiensium*, immolavit Diis, et—misit beneficiarios ad domum Fructuosi Episcopi," &c.; and the same thing is said by Prudentius: "Felix Tarraco," &c. 2. There is in it no pompous declamation by the Roman Magistrate, and no curious and impertinent inquiry into the grounds and reasons of the Christian religion. 3. No promise of rewards or honours is made to apostatizing Christians. 4. The persons accused, instead of displaying a verbose and systematic confession of their faith, avow that they believe in one God, and that they are Christians. 5. The Roman Magistrate is not represented as holding converse with the persons condemned amidst their sufferings. 6. Some minute and apparently trivial incidents are related, which add greatly to the credibility of the narrative. Thus days, and even hours, are scrupulously specified; and the circumstances which attended the putting on and putting off the shoes of Fructuosus, are related with as much care as the circumstances of his martyrdom. This is the style of a faithful,

exempted soldiers,* Aurelius, Festucius, Æius, Pollentius, Donatus, and Maximus arrived at his house. Hearing the sound of their feet, he instantly arose, and came to the threshold in his slippers. The soldiers said, "Come, the Governor hath sent for thee, and thy Deacons." Fructuosus answered, "Let us go; but permit me first to put on my shoes;" and the soldiers permitted him; and then were Fructuosus, and the two Deacons, straightway received into prison. The Bishop, in full assurance of obtaining from the Lord that crown to which he was called, prayed without ceasing. The brethren were with him comforting him, and entreated to be remembered in his prayers.

On the sixth day of their imprisonment, they were brought forth to the place of trial, and heard. Æmilian, the President, said, "Bring in Fructuosus, the Bishop, together with Augurius and Eulogius." It was immediately answered by the officers of the court, "They are here." Æmilian, addressing Fructuosus, said, "Hast thou heard what the Emperors have commanded?" The Bishop replied, "I know not what they have commanded.† As for me, I am a Christian." The President then said, "They have commanded that the gods be worshipped." "I worship," rejoined Fructuosus, "the one God, who made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that is therein." Æmilian: "Knowest thou that there are gods?" "No!" said the Bishop. "That," said Æmilian, "thou shalt know hereafter." Then Fructuosus looked toward God, and began to pray within himself. Æmilian said, "Who can be obeyed, or feared, or adored, if no worship is paid to the gods, and no veneration to the image of the Emperors?" And, addressing himself to Augurius, the Deacon, he said, "Do not thou listen to the speeches of Fructuosus." To which he replied, "I worship the Almighty God." The President

though not of an elegant, historian. 7. It may be added, that Augustine was acquainted with the story of Fructuosus, as recorded in this narrative. He has quoted the most characteristic parts of it, as will appear in the course of these notes: and, although there be a long interval between the middle of the third century and the days of Augustine, and too much reason to suspect that forgers and interpolators were busy during that interval; yet the authority of Augustine must have weight in the scale of evidence; and, at least, will serve to show that the account of the martyrdom of Fructuosus is not the work of a later age. Ruinart has published many a trifling and many an ignorant story in his "Acta Martyrum sincera." This will be acknowledged by learned men of his own communion. He generally prefaces them with a declaration, that he found them in manuscripts eight or nine hundred years old; that is, in manuscripts just of that age when every man who could write at all, wrote fables. A story which is more ancient than Augustine, has a fairer probability of being genuine. (Dalrymple.)

* "Exempted soldiers:" men who, having distinguished themselves in service, were exempted by their commanders from certain military duties. The term "beneficium" is equivalent to *feudum* or "fief" in the writers on feudal law, and is an interest in land, or things inseparable from the land, or things immovable. The beneficiarius is he who has a beneficium. The term "benefice" is also applied to an ecclesiastical preferment. "Beneficium" also signified any promotion conferred on, or grant made to soldiers, who were thence called "beneficiarii:" this practice was common. It does not, however, appear what the beneficium actually was: it might be any kind of honour, special exemption from service, &c.

† "I know not what they have commanded," &c. As he added this profession of his faith in Christ, it is not improbable that in saying, "Nescio quid præceperunt," ("I know not what they have commanded,") he meant, that "to him it imported nothing what the Emperors had commanded."

then addressed the other Deacon, to whom he said, "Dost thou also worship Fructuosus?" * "No," said Eulogius; "but I worship Him whom Fructuosus worshippeth." Æmilian then said to the martyr, "Art thou a Bishop?" "I am," said he. "Thou wert!" said the Judge. He then pronounced sentence, and condemned them all to be burned alive. While the myrmidons of Æmilian were conducting Fructuosus and the Deacons to the amphitheatre, the multitude began, with one voice, to lament over the Bishop, so great was the esteem which not only the brethren, but the Pagans also, manifested towards him. He was confessedly such an individual as the Holy Spirit, by the Apostle Paul, declares, that a vessel unto honour, and a teacher of the Gentiles, ought to be. The disciples, who knew that he was advancing to an "exceeding weight of glory," rejoiced rather than mourned: many, through kindness, offered him wine mixed with spices to drink; but he refused, saying, "My fast is not yet ended:" for Fructuosus, with his Deacons, had, on the fourth day of the week, instituted a fast in prison; and on the sixth day, says the record, he hasted with confidence and joy to the feast of the Prophets and martyrs, in that paradise which the Lord hath prepared for those who love him.

When Fructuosus approached the amphitheatre, his reader, named Augustalis, forthwith came unto him, and with tears besought permission to take off his shoes. To whom the Bishop answered, "Let me alone, my son: I myself will perform that office; for I am strengthened, and I rejoice in the certainty of the divine promise." After this, Felix, a brother and fellow-soldier, seized his hand, and requested to be remembered in his prayers: to whom Fructuosus, in the hearing of all, with a loud voice, replied, "Thou desirest that I should pray for thee:† depart not, then, from her for whom I must needs pray; for it behoveth me, in my supplications, to remember the universal church, spread from the East unto the West." And now standing at the threshold of the amphitheatre, and about to receive, not punishment, but an unfading crown, he was encompassed with

* "Dost thou also worship Fructuosus?" These words of the Roman Governor are quoted by Augustine. (Serm. cclxxiii. "In Natali Martyrum Fructuosi Episcopi, Augurii et Eulogii, Diaconorum," Opera Augustini, tom. v., pars ii., p. 1623. Edit. 8vo. Paris, 1838.) "Ait illi judex, 'Numquid et tu Fructuosum colis?'" The sense of the verb "colere" is so vague in the Latin language, that it may signify the respect due to superiors, or the worship of the supreme Being. It is probable that the Roman Magistrate intended to express something far short of religious honour; but that Eulogius understood the word in the obvious and popular sense.

† "Thou desirest that I should pray for thee," &c. This is added from Augustine: "Tu si vis ut pro te orem, noli recedere ab illa pro qua oro." In the manuscript the following words only are to be found: "In mente me habere necesse est ecclesiam catholicam, ab oriente usque in occidentem diffusam." Ruinart, considering this as a most apposite authority for the cause of the Roman Catholic Church, has taken pains to print it in capital letters. He appears not to have known, that Protestants believed in "the catholic church, spread from the East unto the West," as truly as himself did; and that the great matter in controversy is, whether the word "catholic," or "universal," ought to be understood in a more extended or more limited sense. It may be conjectured, that Fructuosus meant to reprove Felix, because he requested the prayers of his departing Pastor for himself alone, rather than for the Christian society at large. It is possible, also, that Felix might have been of a character inclined to divisions, a character not unknown in the primitive ages. The passage, viewed in this light, contains a weighty and important admonition. (Dalrymple.)

the soldiers of whose names mention has been made; yet so, that the brethren heard the words which he uttered: he declared, "There will not be wanting a Pastor among you; for the loving-kindness and the covenant of the Lord shall never fail; and that which ye now behold, seemeth but as the tribulation of one hour." Having comforted his companions in affliction, he with them speedily entered into the rest which remains for the people of God.* They were worthy in their martyrdom to receive the fruits promised in the holy Scriptures, and exhibited a striking resemblance to the three Hebrews in the fiery furnace, of whom we have heretofore written. When the wreaths which bound their hands were consumed, they, mindful of their wonted religious worship, and in firm trust of their future resurrection, kneeled down, and implored the mercy of God, until they gave up the ghost together.†

The little estimation in which many of the Christians held their lives may also be illustrated from an anecdote related of two citizens of Antioch, Sapricius, a Priest, and Nicephorus, a layman. These persons had long cherished towards each other an ardent friendship; but some dispute having arisen between them, they separated, without a prospect of ever becoming reconciled. At length Nicephorus, influenced by early recollections and Christian mildness, determined to heal the schism, and accordingly sought, by every means in his power, to soothe the irritated feelings of his friend. But all his efforts proved vain; and Sapricius and he remained apart till the apprehension of the former, which again induced Nicephorus to attempt a reconciliation. As his friend was led to execution, after professing his faith in the boldest manner, he ran to him, and, falling at his feet, implored him to forgive whatever he had done to anger him; but the Priest preserved a stern silence, and the afflicted Nicephorus found all his entreaties received with disdain. Hastening, however, after the procession, he again approached his resentful friend, and repeated his solicitations, but was again rebuffed; on seeing which the guards expressed their surprise that any one should be so anxious to obtain the favour of a man who was on the point of being put to death; but Nicephorus answered, that they knew not what he sought from the confessor of Jesus Christ.‡

* It is recorded in some of the ancient Martyrologies, we are informed, that when these martyrs were in the fire, there was a soldier in the house of Æmilian, who did see the heavens above open, and these witnesses for the truth enter in; the soldier likewise showed the sight at the same time to the daughter of Æmilian, who, beholding the spectacle, was also enabled to testify to the blessedness of those whom her cruel father had condemned. (Foxe.)

† See "Remains of Christian Antiquities, with Explanatory Notes. By Sir David Dalrymple."

‡ When Sapricius was apprehended and brought before the Governor, the latter asked him his name. He answered, "It is Sapricius." "Of what profession are you?" said the Governor. "I am a Christian," said Sapricius. Governor. "Are you of the Clergy?" The prisoner at the bar said, "I have the honour to be a Priest: we Christians acknowledge one Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, who is God, the only and true God, who created heaven and the earth. The gods of nations are devils." The President, exasperated at his answer, gave orders for him to be put into an engine, like a screw-press, which the tyrants had invented to torment the faithful. The excessive pain of this torture did not shake the constancy of Sapricius; and he said unto the Judges, "My body is in your power; but my soul you cannot touch. Only my Saviour,

At length they reached the place of execution; and at the sight of the preparations which were made to separate his early and venerated acquaintance from him for ever in this world, Nicephorus renewed his appeals to the clemency and former affection of the Priest. But Sapricius remained in the same temper; and God, as it has been rightly observed, punished him for his unchristian indulgence of resentment, by depriving him of the grace which had hitherto enabled him to persevere in the profession of the truth. Everything being ready for his execution, he knelt down to receive the stroke which was to sever his head from his body; but, just as the executioner raised the sword, he called out to him to stop, and declared that he was ready to obey the Emperors, and sacrifice to the gods. Nicephorus started with astonishment at hearing these words. He had witnessed the constancy hitherto exhibited by his friend with the highest admiration, and had been induced to humble himself so deeply before him, because he regarded him not only as one whose affections he wished to regain, but as a saint whose blessing would render him more acceptable in the sight of God. Many, therefore, were the sorrowful emotions which filled his mind at witnessing the fall of Sapricius. He had not only to lament him as lost, but to behold the faith and constancy of Christians put in doubt among their pagan enemies. "Lose not the crown," he exclaimed, addressing the Priest, "which you have won by so many sufferings." But these words were lost, as his others had been, to the ear of Sapricius; and, as if the spirit of devotion and truth had passed from the fallen confessor to redouble the fervour of his despised friend, Nicephorus turned to the attendants, and said, "I am a Christian: I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, whom this man hath renounced. Let me die instead of him." He was taken at his word; and, information being sent to the Magistrate, he expired beneath the sword which had been raised for Sapricius.*

Jesus Christ, is Master of this." The President, seeing him so resolute, pronounced this sentence: "Sapricius, Priest of the Christians, who is ridiculously persuaded that he shall rise again, shall be delivered over to the executioner of public justice, to have his head severed from his body, because he has contemned the edict of the Emperors." After all, Sapricius apostatized.

* Stebbing, History of the Christian Church, vol. i., pp. 119, 120. Milner justly observes: "The account ends here; but if Sapricius lived to repent, as I hope he did, he might see what a thing it is for a miserable mortal, whose sufficiency rests entirely on divine grace, to despise, condemn, or exult over his brother. The last became the first, and God showed his people wonderfully by this case, that he will support them in their sufferings for his name, but, at the same time, will have them to be humble, meek, and forgiving. This is the first instance I have seen of a man attempting to suffer for Christ on philosophical grounds; and it failed. Let Christians and men of self-sufficiency be ever thus kept asunder, and let both their cause and their spirit be preserved distinct and separate. It appears that Christian fortitude is a very different thing from the pride of philosophy, or the sullenness of Indians, and cannot even subsist in the absence of Christian meekness and charity. Philosophers and savages can maintain the hardy spirit of nature amidst the highest gratifications of malice and ferocity. The spirit of suffering for Christ being above nature, and wrought in the heart by the grace of Christ, cannot subsist if the Spirit of God be provoked to leave the sufferer; and the event of this story shows how little reason infidels have to plume themselves on the hardihood of others who have suffered by the side of Christians. Their spirit is entirely of a different nature." (Hist. of the Church of Christ, vol. i., cent. iii., chap. xvi., p. 506.)

The Persian campaign of Valerian was fatally disastrous, a just and awful retribution of the miseries he brought upon the Christians: it ended in the spectacle, which had never yet been witnessed, of a Roman Emperor being led in triumph by a barbarian Prince. This was the fate of Valerian; who was taken prisoner at Edessa, by Sapor, the King of Persia, and continued in that condition until his death. An early and a fearful fate appeared to be the inevitable lot of the persecutors of Christianity. The profound and earnest conviction of the Christians, namely, that the hand of divine Providence was perpetually and visibly interposing in the affairs of men, was not so deeply imbued with the spirit of their divine Master, as to suppress the language of triumph, or even of vengeance, when the enemies of their God and of themselves either suffered defeat or death, or, worse than that, a cruel and insulting captivity. The fall of Decius, which we have recorded already, was, if we give full credence to the Pagan account, worthy of the ancient Roman republic: he was environed by the Goths; his son was killed by an arrow; he cried aloud, that the loss of a single soldier was nothing to the glory of the empire; he renewed the battle, and fell valiantly. The Christian writers strip away all the more ennobling incidents. According to their account, having been decoyed by the enemy, or misled by a treacherous friend, into a marsh, where he could neither fight nor fly, he perished tamely; and his unburied body was left to the beasts and carrion-fowls. The captivity of Valerian, the mystery which hung over his death, allowed ample scope to the imagination of those whose national hatred of the barbarians would attribute the most unmanly ferocity to the Persian conqueror, and of those who would consider their God exalted by the most cruel and debasing sufferings inflicted on the oppressor of the church. Thus writes Milman; but the primitive Christians were better students of the word of God. If the Scripture is to be credited, we are bound to believe in the existence of a retributive Providence; and if a righteous God be the supernal Arbiter of heaven and earth, he will do right. "To me belongeth vengeance and recompence." "He is the Lord our God," said the Psalmist; "his judgments are in all the earth. He has remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations. Which covenant he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac; and confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant; saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance: when there were but a few men in number; yea, very few, and strangers in it. When they went from one nation to another, from one kingdom to another people; He suffered no man to do them wrong; yea, he reproved Kings for their sakes; saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my Prophets no harm." On these principles the Most High has ever acted; and persecutors have invariably, both in ancient and modern times, drunk largely of the bitter cup.

We return to Valerian. Before he met his adversaries in the field, to please his parasite Macrianus, and to secure the favour of the pagan deities in his enterprise, he caused the cruel edict against the Chris-

tians to be issued. He therefore commenced proceedings against Sapor, the King of Persia, with the blood of the saints upon his skirt, and the withering curse of the Most High upon his conscience. The sin of Valerian was in opposition to light and knowledge; he had long known and respected the Christians; and it is usual with divine Providence to visit such in a manner the most exemplary and heart-searching. The Emperor entering Mesopotamia, both armies met, and a general engagement was expected. It proved otherwise; inasmuch as, immediately before the anticipated conflict, Valerian, through the negligence, or, as some say, the treachery, of Macrianus, was led into an incommodious place, without sufficient support; and being surrounded by the Persians, he was taken prisoner by Sapor,* who conveyed the old man into his own country, and treated him with greater indignity than his meanest slave. The tyrannical Persian, elated with the prosperous circumstance, made the Emperor his footstool whenever he took exercise on horseback; thus causing the greatest Monarch in the world, and to whom all nations had paid homage, to bow down, that Sapor might tread upon his neck in mounting his saddle. Valerian continued seven years in this miserable servitude. Lactantius observes: "That the Roman name remained long the scoff and derision of the barbarians; and what added much to the severity of the fallen Emperor's punishment was, that, although he had an Emperor for his son, he found no one to revenge his captivity, and his most abject and servile state; neither was he ever demanded back. After, when he had finished this shameful life under so great dishonour, he was flayed; and the skin was dyed with vermilion, and placed in the temple of the gods of the barbarians, that the remembrance of a triumph so signal might be perpetuated; and that this spectacle might always be exhibited to our Ambassadors, as an admonition to the Romans, that, beholding the spoils of their captured Emperor in a Persian temple, they should not place too great confidence in their own strength."†

Gallienus was now the sole and legitimate Sovereign of the Roman empire: he had long supported with impatience the censorial severity of his father and colleague, and received the intelligence of his misfortunes with secret pleasure and avowed indifference. "I knew that my father was a mortal," said he; "and since he has acted as becomes a brave man, I am satisfied." While Rome lamented the fate of her Sovereign, the savage coldness of his son was extolled, by the servile courtiers, as the perfect firmness of the hero and the stoic. His reign was most confused and calamitous; heaven and earth appearing

* "It has been said that Macrianus was concerned in betraying him to the Persians; and the suspicion is confirmed by his receiving the imperial title from the army in the East." (Burton.)

† "Ita ille dignissime triumphatus, aliquandiu vixit, ut diu barbaris Romanum nomen ludibrio ac derisui esset. Etiam hoc ei accessit ad pœnam, quod cum filium haberet Imperatorem, captivitatis suæ tamen ac servitutis extremæ non invenit ultorem, nec omnino repetitus est. Postea vero cum pudendam vitam in illo dedecore finivit, direpta est ei cutis et exuta visceribus pellis est infecta rubro colore, ut in templo barbarorum deorum ad memoriam clarissimi triumphi poneretur, legatisque nostris semper esset ostentus, ne nimium Romani viribus suis fiderent, cum exuvias capti Principis apud deos suos cernerent." (Lactantii Liber De Mort. Persecut., cap. v., Vesont. 1838.)

to join their energies to destroy and root up the name and the people of Rome. At the commencement it is stated that the sun was darkened, earthquakes took place in many parts, the sea overflowed its bounds, the pestilence continued to rage, and the whole empire on every side had to withstand the hostile attacks of invading foes; together with intestine broils which constantly occurred, at a time when the reins of government were held with a very loose hand, and produced a troop of usurpers against the son of Valerian. The soldiers claimed the right of selecting their own Generals, who forthwith assumed the title of Emperor; and, as they were all opposed to each other, so they were all unanimous in accomplishing the ruin of Gallienus. These ephemeral Emperors amounted, it is said, to thirty, and are generally recorded by the name of "The Thirty Tyrants." Mr. Gibbon imagines the number to have been greatly overrated; and concludes that the reign of Gallienus, distracted as it was, produced only nineteen competitors for the throne. Several of these pretenders to the dignity of empire possessed a considerable share of vigour and ability, which had recommended them to Valerian, who promoted them to important commands. Of these nineteen tyrants Tetricus only was a Senator, and Pison only a noble; and not one enjoyed a life of peace, or died a natural death. "As soon as they were invested with the bloody purple, they inspired their adherents with the same fears and ambition which had occasioned their own revolt. Encompassed with domestic conspiracy, military sedition, and civil war, they trembled on the edge of precipices; in which, after a longer or shorter term of anxiety, they were inevitably lost. These upstart Monarchs received, however, such honours as the flattery of their respective armies and provinces could bestow; but their claims, founded on rebellion, could never obtain the sanction of law or history. Italy, Rome, and the Senate, constantly adhered to the cause of Gallienus; and he alone was considered as the Sovereign of the empire. The rapid and perpetual transitions from the cottage to the throne, and from the throne to the grave, might have amused an indifferent philosopher, were it possible for a philosopher to remain indifferent amidst the general calamities of human kind. The election of these temporary Emperors, their power, and their death, were equally destructive to their subjects and adherents. The price of their fatal elevation was instantly discharged to the troops, by an immense donative, drawn from the bowels of the exhausted people. However virtuous was their character, however pure their intentions, they found themselves reduced to the hard necessity of supporting their usurpation by frequent acts of rapine and cruelty. When they fell, they involved armies and provinces in their fall." *

* There is still extant a most savage mandate from Gallienus to one of his Ministers, after the suppression of Ingenuus, who had assumed the purple in Illyricum. "It is not enough," says that soft but inhuman Prince, "that you exterminate such as have appeared in arms; the chance of battle might have served me as effectually. The male sex of every age must be extirpated; provided that, in the execution of the children and old men, you can contrive means to save our reputation. Let every one die who has dropped an expression, who has entertained a thought, against me; against *me*, the son of Valerian, the father and brother of so many Princes. Remember that Ingenuus was

Such was the cloud of ills which hovered around the throne of Gallienus when he took possession of it. It was no kind regard that he manifested toward the Christian name and character that actuated him in his movements: he shut himself up in the capital, and reflected on his perilous position; he had no friends to lose, and judged it the wisest plan to create some, if possible. He knew that while his father favoured the Christians, he reigned in prosperity; but when he began to persecute them, the divine vengeance fell both upon him and upon the country. The Emperor therefore issued an edict * to terminate the sufferings of the church, which appears to have taken effect wherever his authority was acknowledged. By this imperial decree he granted to the Christians the free exercise of their religion; he commanded that all the burial-grounds belonging to their churches, and the other houses and grounds which had been confiscated under the previous government, should be restored to them: he thus recognised the Christian church as a legally existing corporate body; for none but such a body could, according to the Roman constitution, possess a common property.† Macrianus,

made Emperor: tear, kill, hew in pieces. I write to you with my own hand, and would inspire you with my own feelings." (Gibbon, Decline and Fall, vol. i., chap. x., 8vo. edit. Milman, 1838.)

* "Gallienus," says Eusebius, "restrained the persecution against us by sending edicts, in which he commanded that the Ministers of the word might perform the customary duties of their office with freedom, the copy of which was as follows:—'The Emperor Cæsar Publius Licinius Gallienus, Pius, Felix Augustus, to Dionysius, Pinna, Demetrius, and the other Bishops. The benefit of the privilege, granted by me, I have ordered to be issued through the whole world, that all may depart from their religious retreats; and therefore you may make use of this copy of my edict that no one may molest you. And this liberty, indeed, which you are now permitted to have, has been long since granted by me. Aurelius Cyrenius, therefore, who has the chief administration of affairs, will keep the copy here given by me.' This, that it may be the better understood, we have here presented to our readers in a translation from the Latin tongue. There is also another ordinance from him, which he addressed to other Bishops, in which he grants permission to recover what he calls the cemeteries." (Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. vii., cap. 13.)

† Mr. Townsend questions whether Neander is right in his conclusion; and thinks that Gallienus had no notion of the mass of Christian societies forming one church, and that only was a *religio licita* which was established, not tolerated, by law. "The permission granted by the English law to the Socinians, that they may have the exercise of their worship, and possess their burial-grounds, if they have any, without confiscation, does not amount to the recognition of the Socinians as a corporate, but as a scattered, body. If, too, the mere toleration of a religious body constitute their faith a *religio licita*, then every sect, party, and denomination, from the most ancient error to the latest fancy, are all in England *religiones licitæ*. That which we are required, by expediency or principle, to tolerate, cannot be described by the same terms as that which we affectionately or devotionally love." This is highly hypercritical. Christianity was not intended by Gallienus to be recognised as the religion of the state; but it was certainly taken under the imperial protection, and the profession of Christianity viewed as lawful; consequently, it was a *religio licita*. The situation of the Christians in the days of Gallienus was in some degree similar to that of the Nonconformists in this country, at the passing of the Toleration Act. "By that Act," says Sir J. Nicholl, in the famous case of Kemp *v.* Wickes, "an important change was worked in the situation of His Majesty's Protestant Dissenting subjects; and the baptisms now administered by Dissenting Ministers stand upon very different grounds from those by mere laymen. There were many laws, both of Church and State, requiring conformity to the Church, creating disabilities, imposing penalties, and denouncing excommunications upon all Nonconformity. Now, supposing that, during the existence of these disabilities, it could be maintained that, in point of law, no act of Nonconformists could be recognised in a court of justice, and therefore that a baptism administered by such persons could not be noticed at all, either by the Church, or by the courts administering the law of the

however, still adhered to his former measures; and, as he had set himself up for Emperor in the East, and in Egypt, in these countries it was not till after his fall,* A.D. 261, that the toleration edict of Gallienus came into effect. Dionysius was not yet able to return to Alexandria. The whole of Christian Africa appears to have continued for some time longer in a state of affliction. Galerius, the Proconsul, who put Cyprian to death, died himself shortly after; but the Receiver-General of the province continued the same cruel system, and many of the leading Clergy were tortured and slain. The names of several persons are recorded who suffered in Numidia;† and from Eusebius we may infer, that Palestine was one of the countries where the authority of Macrianus was still productive of evil to the church.‡ Hence, while the Christians in the West were already in the enjoyment of repose, persecution may have continued in those countries in compliance with the edict of Valerian.

Macrianus, having established himself in the East, embraced every opportunity of vexing the church. Marinus, of Cæsarea, in Palestine, who was one of the army, distinguished for his military prowess, and illustrious for his family and opulence, was beheaded for his manly confession of the Lord Jesus. Marinus was about to receive the office of Centurion, which, in the course of usage in the army, was to fall upon him by right. Just as the Centurion's staff, the *vitis*,§ was about to be intrusted to him, another soldier, who had the next promise of promotion, stepped forward, and declared that, according to the old laws, Marinus could not hold any Roman military rank, because he was a Christian, and did not sacrifice to the gods and the Emperor. Whereupon Achæus, then being Judge, examined him respecting his faith; and, finding him to be as represented, and manifesting great firmness in his belief, gave him three hours to deliberate and to advise with himself, and then decide whether he would remain a Christian. In the mean time Theotecnus, Bishop in Cæsarea, perceiving him to be in doubt and perplexity, led him to the church; he then pointed on the one hand to the sword which the soldier bore upon his side, and on the other to the book of the Gospel, which he laid before him. "He must choose between the two,—between the military rank and the Gospel!" The soldier immediately lifted up his right hand, and took hold of the Gospel. "Now," said the

Church,—yet could it be maintained now, that such a baptism was a mere nullity? If such could have been considered as the view of the law before the Toleration Act, yet that Act would change the whole shape of the thing." Also the language of Lord Stowell, in K. P. *v.* Stone, enforcing the obedience due by a Clergyman to the Articles of the Church of England, "As the law now is, every one goes to his parochial church with a certainty of not feeling any of his solemn opinions offended. If any person dissents, a remedy is provided by the mild and wise spirit of toleration which has prevailed in modern times, and which allows that he should join himself to persons of persuasions similar to his own." Consequently, Christianity became, under Gallienus, in the strict sense of the word, a *religio licita*.

* He was condemned as an "inimicus diis Romanis et sacris legibus." So Pont. in Vit. Cypriani; compare also the Passio Cypriani.

† Burton, Lect. on Eccles. Hist., lect. xxvii.

‡ Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. vii., cap. 15.

§ The *vitis* was the badge of office with which the Centurion punished his men. (Juv. Sat., viii., 247; Plin., xiv., 1.)

Bishop, "hold fast on God; and mayest thou obtain what thou hast chosen. Depart in peace." On his return into the presence of the Governor, he was announced by the Crier of the Court; and being arraigned, he was speedily beheaded. His remains were secured by Astyrius, a noble Senator, and one of the chief and most wealthy of that order, who bestowed upon them an honourable burial.*

The beneficial effect of the edict of Gallienus was immediately felt in the capital. The see of Rome, which had been vacant for nearly a year since the death of Xystus, was filled up by the election of Dionysius; the same person who, while he was Presbyter of that church, had corresponded with Dionysius of Alexandria upon the baptismal controversy. He appears to have been a man of considerable learning, as well as piety; and from the absence of any materials for ecclesiastical history for the following year, we may hope that, at least in Italy, the Christians were without molestation. Gallienus was certainly favourable to them; but, through the whole of the year 260, his attention was otherwise engaged. Macrianus, the bigoted persecutor, and his two sons, were put to death shortly after, and the authority of the Emperor being now recognised in Egypt, the condition of the Christians in that country became more favourable. Shortly after this, Æmilianus, the Governor of Egypt, assumed the title of Emperor, and Alexandria was made the scene of warfare and bloodshed.† It does not, however, appear that the spirit of party raised the usual feeling of hostility against the Christians, who were themselves divided in their political sentiments; for while some supported Æmilianus, others took the part of Gallienus. Ere long, the usurper was taken prisoner, and the whole of Egypt once more submitted to the Emperor of Rome. In the state of comparative cessation from open and direct persecution, the Christian church was continually, during this time, kept in a state of suspense, from the irruption of the Goths and other barbarous nations into several parts of the East, who ran through the country like a flood, and carried away as prisoners many of the inhabitants. Christians and Heathens, we are told, were alike

* Mosheim loses sight of the fact, that it was under the government of Macrianus that he was put to death; and says, that he could not have suffered in consequence of the edict of Valerian; for that was at this time no longer in force, having been virtually repealed by the rescript of Gallienus; but he must have been put to death under the old law of Trajan. The course of proceeding was briefly this: An informer stood forward; and, upon the accused person confessing himself guilty, he was commanded to sacrifice to the Roman deities: this he refused; and was, in consequence, consigned over to capital punishment. From this instance it is evident, says Mosheim, that the ancient imperial edicts against the Christians, notwithstanding their having been succeeded by others of a more mild and humane character, were yet considered as remaining in full force; and that even in the most tranquil times, and under Emperors by no means disposed to the exercise of severity, a power still remained with the Presidents of putting to death such persons as should be regularly informed against, and who acknowledged themselves to be Christians. The benevolent act of Astyrius brought him into no sort of danger or trouble; for this very obvious reason,—namely, that, by the law of Trajan, the Judge had no power of punishing, unless an accuser came forward; and no one, it may be easily conceived, had either the will or the courage to prefer an accusation against Astyrius, who, besides being a man of the highest rank and authority, possessed a still further claim to respect, from his enjoying the personal friendship of the Emperor. (Mosheim.)

† Burton, Lect. on Eccles. Hist., lect. xxvii.

exposed to these predatory excursions; many of the Clergy were among the number: it is said, however, that the pious life and amiable conduct of these men contributed to produce the happiest effects; and an extension of the faith was manifestly the result. Heresies were rife, to which we have briefly alluded in our account of Dionysius of Alexandria; and no external persecution took place until the death of Gallienus. His father continued in Persia, in servile bondage, his son having no desire to attempt his rescue: charity may lead us to the conclusion, that Rome was too enfeebled to contest this point with Persia. An aspirant of the name of Odenatus, a citizen of Palmyra, invaded the kingdom of Sapor, and proceeded as far as the walls of Ctesiphon; and Gallienus, as a reward for his bravery, presented to him the government of Egypt, under the title of Emperor: he prosecuted his conquests; but, in 267, he, with his son Herod, was put to death, when his masculine and high-spirited Queen, Zenobia, succeeded to his title and possessions. In the following year, Gallienus was treacherously persuaded by his two Generals, Claudius Martianus and Cecropius, to advance against Aureolus, who was becoming formidable in the north of Italy; and the Emperor, and his brother Valerian, were both put to death.*

Claudius succeeded to the empire, which was conferred upon him by the soldiers, and subsequently ratified by the Senate. The obscurity which covered his origin, sufficiently betrays the meanness of his birth. It appears that he was a native of one of the provinces bordering upon the Danube, that his youth was spent in arms, and that his valour arrested the attention of Decius. He rose to considerable eminence as a soldier, and was much noticed, because feared, by Gallienus. When he ascended the throne, he was about fifty-four years of age. If Claudius became a persecutor of the Christians at Rome, as the annalist Baronius asserts, we may conjecture that he found them disposed to honour the memory of Gallienus. There is, however, very little reason to imagine that any systematic persecution took place in the days of Claudius; because, on the one hand, he was annoyed by competitors for his throne, and the inroads of barbarous hordes from the East; and, on the other, he was arrested by the hand of death; for, after a short and glorious reign of two years, the Emperor expired at Sirmium, amid the tears of his subjects. Before his decease, he recommended as his successor Aurelian; but the people, wishful to render honour to the bravery and patriotic enterprise of Claudius, were determined to retain the imperial purple in his family; therefore his brother Quintilius was raised to the throne, which he ascended only soon to leave. The sanction of the Senate and a mutiny of the troops accompanied each other; and, hearing that the latter had invested the well-known Aurelian with supreme

* "As the cloud rising before the sun, obscuring it by its shadow, and appearing in its place, afterwards passes away and is dissipated, and the sun, which had arisen before, seems to rise again; so Macrianus, who had aspired to the very power of Gallienus, is now no more, indeed *never was*: but the latter, as he was previously, is now again, and his government, as if it had lost the feebleness of age, and had become purified of its former baseness, now arose, and assumed a more flourishing aspect; and is seen and heard, and diffuses itself everywhere." (Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. vii., cap. 24.)

power, he ordered his veins to be opened, and suicidally withdrew himself from the unequal conflict, after a reign of only seventeen days.

Lucius Domitianus Aurelianus was the next Emperor: he succeeded to the throne in 270, and was the son of a peasant of Sirmium. He enlisted in the troops as a common soldier; successively rose to the rank of a Centurion, a Tribune, the Prefect of a legion, the Inspector of the camp, and General; and then, during the Gothic war, he exercised the important office of Commander-in-Chief of the cavalry. His reign lasted only about four years and nine months; nevertheless, the greater part of that period was occupied in some memorable achievement. He put an end to the Gothic war, chastised the Germans who invaded Italy, recovered Gaul, Spain, and Britain out of the hands of Tetricus, and destroyed the proud monarchy which Zenobia had erected in the East, on the ruins of the afflicted empire. Aurelian had been educated in superstition; and had, from the beginning, scarcely any but hostile feelings towards the Christian religion: he was not only most fanatically devoted to the eastern worship of the sun, whose Priestess his mother was, and to which deity he built a temple at Rome, but he was in every respect a blind supporter of the old heathen worship. The welfare of the state appeared to him to be most intimately connected with the proper performance of the olden forms of superstitious devotion. For instance, when, during the threatened danger of a war with the German tribes, some of the members of the Roman Senate had proposed in that body, that, after the old custom, the Sibylline Books should be opened, and their counsel asked, some of the Senators said, that there was no need to take refuge there, the power of the Emperor was so great, that there was no need to ask counsel of the gods. The matter dropped for this time, and was afterwards taken up afresh. But the Emperor, who might very well have heard of these transactions in the Senate, expressed his displeasure, and wrote to the people thus:—"I wonder that you should have hesitated so long to open the Sibylline Books,* as if you had been consulting in a Christian church, and not in the temple of all the gods." He called upon them to support him by religious ceremonies of every kind; for it could be no shame to conquer with the help of the gods. He offered to pay all costs incurred by the offering of every kind of victim, and also to give towards it prisoners from all nations, and thus also human victims.† It is easy to conceive, from these circumstances, that the

* "The severe Emperor reproaches the Senate for their want of faith in these mystic volumes, or of zeal in the public service, as though they had been infected by the principles of Christianity." (Milman.)

† "Est epistola," says Flavius Vopiscus, "Aureliani de Libris Sibyllinis; nam ipsam quoque indidi ad fidem rerum:—Miror vos, Patres sancti, tamdiu de aperiendis Sibyllinis dubitasse libris; perinde quasi in Christianorum ecclesia, non in templo deorum omnium, tractaretis. Agite, igitur, et castimonia Pontificum, cærimoniisque solemnibus juvate Principem, necessitate publica laborantem. Inspiciantur libri: quæ facienda fuerint celebrentur: quemlibet sumtum, cujuslibet gentis captivos, qualibet animalia regia non abnuo, sed libens offero: neque enim indecorum est diis juvantibus vincere: sic apud majores nostros multa finita sunt bella, sic cœpta. Si quid est sumptuum, datis ad præfectum ærarii litteris decerni jussi, est præterea vestra auctoritatis arca publica, quam magis refertam esse reperio, quam cupio." (Flav. Vopisc., Vit. Aurelian., cap. xx.)

Emperor was not disinclined to shed the blood of Christians to the honour of his deities; and that, from the dictates of his own spirit, he would be disposed to adopt harsh and severe measures.*

With the exception of a few individuals, who were deprived of their lives through the abuse of power in the President, after the favourable edict of Gallienus had been promulgated, the Christians appear to have enjoyed tranquillity during the eight years that the son of Valerian occupied the throne, as well as the two years that the empire was governed by Claudius; and during the first four years in which Aurelian swayed the sceptre, no hostile measures were taken against Christianity. He also showed, by his conduct on one occasion, in the third year of his reign, that he considered the Christian church under imperial protection; for when a contention had arisen among the Christians in Antioch, who should be the Bishop of that place, the church appealed to the Emperor, and requested that the Bishop, Paul of Samosata, who had already been deposed by the Antiochean Council, on account of his doctrinal opinions, but had hitherto found support in Zenobia, who was now conquered by Aurelian, might be compelled at last to lay down his office. Aurelian did not altogether refuse to interfere in this unprecedented cause; but, with laudable impartiality, declined any actual cognizance of the affair, and transferred the sentence from the personal enemies of Paul, the Bishops of Syria, to those of Rome and Italy. This interference, however, cannot wholly be attributed to the good feeling of the Emperor toward the church; but rather to the enmity which he manifested to Zenobia, under whose wing the Heresiarch of the East had taken shelter. Whatever sentiments had been entertained by the Emperor toward the church until now, they at once became decided, and easily understood. It was in the fifth year of the Emperor's reign, whether influenced solely by the superstitious suggestions of his own mind, or instigated by evil advisers, does not fully appear, that he was, nevertheless, induced to make preparation for a general persecution of those harmless people; which, had he lived long enough (and, judging from the severity of his character, and his recklessness of human blood, he would not, if committed in the strife, have hesitated at any measures to subdue the spirit of his subjects) to have carried into execution, would, in all probability, from the natural ferocity of his disposition, and the subjection in which he was held by clamorous bigots and a malignant priesthood, have been accompanied with greater cruelty, and proved more disastrous to the Christian interests, than any of those which preceded it. Eusebius† does not hesitate to declare, that Aurelian was industriously prompted, by certain advisers, to persecute the Christians. It is very possible that either the Platonic philosophers, who possessed great influence in those days, or the heathen Priests, who had many friends among the more noble ladies of the court, might have incited the Emperor to an assault upon the church, as a measure calculated to become highly beneficial to the interests of the empire. By any one who shall have made himself

* Neander, History of the Christian Religion and Church, vol. i., p. 144.

† Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. vii., cap. 30.

acquainted with the life and character of this Emperor, it must readily be perceived, that, without recurring to the incitements of other people, this projected extermination of the Christians may well be accounted for from Aurelian's superstition and cruelty. From the whole list of Emperors, down to Constantine the Great, it would scarcely be possible to select one who can be said to have exceeded him in a superstitious cast of mind, or to have been more devotedly attached to all the extravagant and disgusting absurdities of the heathen mythology and worship.* About the time that Aurelian would be celebrating his Quinquennalia, his sanguinary edicts against the faith of Christ were first issued; but they did not penetrate far into the interior, owing to the sudden death of the persecutor himself. As the edict would first take effect at Rome, Felix, the Bishop, appears to have been among the first victims; who, after having performed all that could be required of him in such perilous times, having taken great pains to strengthen the weak in faith, and to encourage such as might be called to suffer for the sake of Christ; having baptized many catechumens, that they might be provided with the assistance which the church is able to afford in the trying hour; and having also gained many infidels to the faith even while it was powerfully attacked and gainsayed by human authority; he was led forth to suffer, and by his patient and firm example he instructed more efficaciously than by his sermons. He is supposed to have suffered death by beheading. About the same time, and before the progress of the persecution was arrested, Agapetus is said to have suffered. He was a young man who had consecrated all his fortune

* The mother of Aurelian, as we learn from Vopiscus, was a Priestess of the sun; and by her son this luminary appears to have been regarded through life as the supreme deity. At the conclusion of an oration, in which he returns thanks to Valerian for the honours which he had conferred upon him, he thus expresses himself:—"Dii faciant et deus certus Sol ut et Senatus de me sic judicet." (Flav. Vopisc, in Aurel., cap. xiv.) It is plain, therefore, that he placed more confidence in the sun, than in all the rest of the heathen deities put together. Upon the discomfiture of the army of Zenobia at Emessa, he attributed his victory entirely to the sun; and therefore, immediately after the battle, "Ad templum Heliogabali tendebat," says the historian, "quasi communi officio vota soluturus." (Ibid., cap. xxv.) We find it also recorded of him, (cap. xxviii.,) that he placed in the temple of the sun at Rome the sumptuous vestments, enriched with jewels, which he had taken in his wars with the Persians, Armenians, and other people of the East. At Palmyra, also, the temple of the sun having, in the general scene of havoc and devastation by which the utter ruin of that great and opulent city was finally completed, been plundered and overthrown by the infuriate soldiery, he, with the most anxious solicitude, made instant provision for its being magnificently re-edified and dedicated anew. (Ibid., cap. xxx.) Shortly after this, he caused a most splendid temple to be erected in honour of the sun at Rome, and embellished it with an abundance of gold and precious stones. (Ibid., cap. xxxix.) Hence, in an encomiastic oration in the Senate subsequently to his death, delivered by Aurelianus Tacitus, it is, amongst other things, remarked in his praise, that, through his liberality, one temple alone (namely, the temple of the sun) had been enriched with fifteen thousand pounds of gold, and that every other temple in the city glittered with the resplendence of his offerings. (Ibid., cap. xli.) Finally, on one of his coins (see Spanheim, De Usu et Præstantiâ Numis. Antiq., vol. ii., p. 485) we find his portrait encircled with the following legend: "Sol Dominus Romani Imperii." Now, with proofs like these before his eyes, of this Emperor's very extravagant, not to say insane, veneration for the sun, who is there, says Mosheim, "I would ask, that can feel in the least degree surprised at his having resolved on a rigorous persecution of the Christians, by whom this great object of his unbounded admiration and reverence was deemed in no shape deserving of divine honours?" (See Mosheim's Commentaries.)

to the relief of the poor; was seized by the imperial officers, exposed to various torments, and at last beheaded at Prænestе, about twenty-four miles from the capital.

While the ink was scarcely dry which rendered authoritative the edicts of Aurelian, he was arrested by that mandate which all are compelled to obey: "Here shall thy proud waves be stayed!" Conceiving it expedient to exercise the restless temper of his legions in some foreign war, and finding that the Persian Monarch still exulted in the shame of Valerian, and braved with impunity the offended majesty of Rome, he resolved to undertake an expedition in the East. At the head of an army less formidable by its numbers than by its discipline and valour, the Emperor advanced as far as the straits which divide Europe from Asia. He there experienced that the most absolute power is a weak defence against the effects of despair. He had threatened one of his secretaries, who was accused of extortion; and it was known that he seldom threatened in vain. The last hope which remained for the criminal was, to involve some of the principal officers of the army in his danger, or at least in his fears. Artfully counterfeiting his master's hand, he showed them, in a long and bloody list, their own names devoted to death. Without suspecting or examining the fraud, they resolved to secure their lives by the murder of the Emperor. On his march between Byzantium and Heraclea, Aurelian was suddenly attacked by the conspirators, whose stations gave them a right to surround his person; and, after a short resistance, fell by the hand of Mucapor, a General whom he had always loved and trusted. He died regretted by the army, detested by the Senate, but universally acknowledged as a warlike and a fortunate Prince.* "Aurelian," says Lactantius, "might have recollected the fate of the captive Emperor; yet, being of a nature outrageous and headstrong, he forgot both *his* sin and its punishment, and by deeds of cruelty irritated the divine wrath. He was not, however, permitted to accomplish what he had devised; for just as he began to give loose to his rage, he was slain. His bloody edict had not reached the more distant provinces, when he himself lay all bloody on the earth at Cœnophrurium in Thrace, assassinated by his familiar friends, who had taken up groundless suspicions against him. Examples of such a nature, and so numerous, ought to have deterred succeeding tyrants; nevertheless, they were not only not dismayed, but, in their misdeeds against God, became more bold and presumptuous."†

An interregnum of six months succeeded the death of Aurelian, which doubtless was not favourable to the church; but Tacitus, who succeeded, revoked the persecuting edicts which had been issued, and gave to the Christians some cessation from persecution and bloodshed.‡ Tacitus lived only a few months after he had assumed the

* Gibbon, Decline and Fall, &c., vol. ii., p. 84. Milman, edit., 8vo. 1838.

† Lactantii Liber de Mortibus Persecutorum, cap. vi.

‡ Tacitus is said to have often dissuaded Aurelian from some act of cruel severity, which might perhaps lead us to think that he would not have wilfully persecuted the Christians. (Flavius Vopiscus.)

purple. Transported in the depth of winter from the soft retirement of Campania to the foot of Mount Caucasus, he sunk under the unaccustomed hardships of a military life. The fatigues of the body were aggravated by the cares of the mind. For a while, the angry and selfish passions of the soldiers had been suspended by the enthusiasm of public virtue. They soon broke out with redoubled violence, and raged in the camp, and even in the tent of the aged Emperor. His mild and amiable character served only to inspire contempt, and he was incessantly tormented with factions which he could not assuage, and by demands which it was impossible to satisfy. Whatever flattering expectations he had conceived of reconciling the public disorders, Tacitus soon was convinced that the licentiousness of the army disdained the feeble restraint of laws, and his last hour was hastened by anguish and disappointment. He expired at Tyana in Cappadocia, after a reign of only six months and about twenty days.* He was succeeded by his brother Florianus, who showed himself unworthy to reign by his hasty usurpation of the purple, without any assurance of the good-will of the Senate; and the soldiers, by whom he had been raised to the empire, after having witnessed his mode of treatment about three months, were glad to surrender all pretensions to him into the hands of Probus, whose activity and enterprise triumphed over every obstacle. His reign, on the whole, was a season of peace to the Christians. Probus had little else to do, during the six years of his reign, than to check the incursions of barbarians into various parts of his empire. The Emperor was successful, though none of these campaigns furnish subjects of ecclesiastical history. The Christians endured much suffering, and greatly rejoiced in the victories which Probus from time to time achieved over the barbarians. This was the case in Gaul, where Gregory of Tours states that the Germans had been the cause of considerable affliction to the Christians, but that Probus had rescued them from their incursions in 277. We have an account of some martyrdoms † which took place at Antioch in this reign; but the time is uncertain, and incidents of that kind may have happened occasionally, without any instructions to that effect having been given by the Emperor.

Probus was put to death by the soldiers in 282, while he was preparing for a war with Persia; and Carus, who immediately succeeded him, gave the title of Cæsar to his two sons, Carinus and Numerianus. The latter has obtained the name of a persecutor; and, among others who are said to have suffered in this reign, mention is made of Eutychianus, Bishop of Rome. There appears but little ground for this assertion, inasmuch as Numerianus accompanied his father to Persia, and his facilities for persecuting the Christians would be very few and distant. He died in the autumn of 284. He can therefore hardly have molested the Christians during the short time that he held the empire with his brother Carinus, after the death of Carus. Numerian was engaged in the Persian expedition, his constitution

* Gibbon, Decline and Fall, chap. xii., vol. ii., p. 67. Milman's edit. 8vo.
† Baronii Annal. Eccles., ad ann. 281.

destroyed, and himself confined to the solitude and darkness of his tent. All civil and military affairs devolved upon Arrius Aper, the Prætorian Prefect, who to the power of his important office added the honour of being father-in-law to Numerian. The imperial pavilion was strictly guarded by his most trusty adherents, and during many days Aper delivered to the army the supposed mandates of their invisible Sovereign. On the return of the troops, the legions halted at Chalcedon, when a report soon circulated of the Emperor's death, and of the presumption of the Minister, who exercised the sovereign power in the name of a Prince who was no more. With rude curiosity the soldiers rushed into the imperial tent, and discovered the corpse of Numerian. His death might easily have been attributed to natural causes; but the concealment which Aper had practised betokened guilt: he was therefore accused of being his murderer. A general assembly of the army was appointed to be held at Chalcedon, whither Aper was transported in chains, as a prisoner and a criminal. A vacant tribunal was erected in the midst of the camp, and the Generals and Tribunes formed a great military council. They soon announced to the multitude that their choice had fallen on Diocletian, Commander of the domestics or body-guards, as the person the most capable of revenging and succeeding their beloved Emperor. The future fortunes of the candidate depended on the chance or conduct of the present hour. Conscious that the station he had filled exposed him to some suspicions, Diocletian ascended the tribunal, and, raising his eyes towards the sun, made a solemn profession of his own innocence, in the presence of the all-seeing deity. Then, assuming the tone of a Sovereign and a Judge, he commanded that Aper should be brought in chains to the foot of the tribunal. "This man," said he, "is the murderer of Numerian;" and, without giving him time to enter on a dangerous justification, drew his sword and buried it in the breast of the unfortunate Prefect.* A charge supported by such decisive proof was admitted without contradiction, and the legions, with repeated acclamations, acknowledged the justice and authority of the Emperor Diocletian. It was not long before Carinus was put to death, and Diocletian reigned supreme. †

The final contest between Paganism and Christianity approached. Almost three hundred years had elapsed since the divine Author of the new religion had entered upon his mortal life in a small village in Palestine; and now, having gained so powerful an ascendancy over the civilized world, the Gospel was to undergo its last and most trying ordeal, before it should assume the reins of empire, and

* Gibbon, Decline and Fall, chap. xii, vol. ii., p. 105. Milman's edit.

† "This Diocletian, ever having an ambitious mind, aspired greatly to be Emperor; to whom, when serving in Gaul as a common soldier, a Druidess foretold, that, 'after he had killed a wild boar, he should be Emperor.' He, taking effect at these words, used much to kill with his hands wild boars; but, seeing no success to come thereof, he used this proverb: 'Ego apros occido, alius pulpamento fruitur!' that is, 'I kill the boars, another eats the flesh!' At length the said Diocletian, being nominated Emperor, and seeing Aper (who had killed Numerian, the Emperor) standing thereby, sware to the soldiers that Numerian was wrongfully killed; and forthwith, running upon Aper with his sword, slew him." (Foxe.)

become the established religion of the Roman world. The temporal authority was everywhere armed in defence of the ancient polytheistic creed. It is therefore of importance to look at the situation of Christianity, what front it had to present that was feasible, and promised ultimate success. Though menaced with persecution again and again, the Gospel of Christ had recently enjoyed security and peace. The Christians had become not merely a public, but an imposing and influential, body; their separate existence had been recognised by the law of Gallienus; their churches had arisen in most of the cities of the empire,—as yet, probably, with no great pretensions to architectural grandeur, though no doubt ornamented by the liberality of the worshippers, and furnished with vestments and chalices, lamps and chandeliers, of silver. These buildings were constantly on the increase. The faithful no longer declined or refused to aspire to the honours of the state: they filled offices of distinction, and even of supreme authority, in the provinces and in the army, and they were exempt, either by tacit connivance, or direct indulgence, from the accustomed sacrifices.* Christians were employed in offices of importance in the imperial court; some were found among the eunuchs and chamberlains, *(cubicularii,)*—from which, however, we are not entitled to infer that the Emperor had any particular partiality for the Christians, for there had been for a long time some Christians among the Cæsariani; and although at first only one of these was a Christian, yet he would probably use his influence, as Lucius, who, having obtained the confidence of the Emperor, was made by him the *Præpositus Cubiculariorum*, to extend Christianity amongst the people of the court.† These Christians immediately round the Emperor might also have great effect in rendering him favourable to their fellow-believers.‡ Among the more immediate attendants upon the Emperor, two or three openly professed the Christian faith: Prisca the wife, and Valeria the daughter, of Diocletian, and the wife of Galerius, were suspected, if not avowed, partakers in the Christian mysteries.§ If it be impossible to form the most remote approximation to their relative numbers with that of the pagan population, it is equally erroneous

* Milman, History of Christianity, vol. ii., p. 260. 8vo. edit.

† Theonas, Bishop of Alexandria, who gave Lucius, one of the royal household, much excellent advice as to the duties of his office, charges him particularly not to be lifted up, and to pride himself, because many in the palace of the Prince had been brought to a knowledge of the truth through him; but far rather to give God thanks that he had made him the instrument of a good work. But we cannot here determine that this Emperor was Diocletian. At all events, it is quite clear that the Emperor in whose court he was, was no Christian; it is not even clear, that he had any prevailing inclination to Christianity; but only that there were hopes of winning him over to the cause by means of his Chamberlain. The Christians about the court were recommended to use the utmost precaution not to offend the heathen Emperor. If a Christian were appointed librarian, he was to take good care not to show any contempt for worldly knowledge and the old authors; he was to be as familiar as a Heathen with all the poets, philosophers, orators, and historians of old; but then he was sometimes to take an opportunity of praising the Scriptures, to mention Christ, and, by degrees, to hint that he is the only true God. "Insurgere poterit Christi mentio, explicabitur paulatim ejus sola divinitas. Omnia hæc cum Christi adjutorio provenire possent." (Galland, Bibl. Patr., tom. iv.; Neander; see also Routh, Reliq. Sacr., vol. iii., p. 307.)

‡ Neander, Hist. of the Christ. Relig. and Church, vol. i., p. 145.

§ Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. viii., cap. 1.

to estimate their strength and influence by numerical calculation. All political changes are wrought by a compact, organized, and disciplined minority. The mass of mankind are shown by experience, and appear fated by the constitution of our nature, to follow any vigorous impulse from a determined and incessantly aggressive few.* From the account given by Eusebius, it appears that the faithful were in every point of view treated with the greatest kindness and benevolence by the Emperors, who intrusted them with the government of provinces,† and gave free permission to the domestics of the palace, together with their wives, their children, and their servants, to make open profession of the faith; nay, that they even manifested a preference for such of their attendants as were members of the Christian community. The Christian Bishops and Pastors, it moreover appears, were held in high respect by the Magistrates, and the Presidents of the provinces. A daily acceleration was hence experienced in the diffusion of Christianity, and churches of considerable extent were founded in most of the principal cities. The calumnies and invectives, also, with which the religion of Christ had in former times been so successfully assailed, were now no longer circulated, or at least failed of producing their accustomed effect. By the same historian, however, it is ingenuously acknowledged, and most deeply deplored, that, instead of turning the liberty they thus enjoyed to good account, the Christians appear to have given the rein to licentiousness, and to have plunged into faults of the most inexcusable and fatal nature.‡

A period of more than thirty years elapsed between the persecution of Valerian and that of Diocletian, in which the church enjoyed much external prosperity and peace; but, alas! many of those virtues which had distinguished their predecessors, and had enabled them to stand against the power and corruption of the whole heathen world, became inoperative and evanescent; and the Christian community displayed a fearful decay of piety and relaxation of morals. Ecclesiastical historians have not hesitated to ascribe the misery which afflicted the church in the latter part of the reign of Diocletian to the displeasure of the Most High on beholding the corruption of the sanctuary. Instead of manifesting gratitude and increased devotedness to God, as an acknowledgment of the many mercies and privileges conferred, the great mass of the people "waxed fat and kicked;" sloth, negligence, envy, discord, fraud, and malice, form the sad catalogue of sins with which the Bishop of Cæsarea charges the believers of this age; and the Christian will not feel disposed to contradict the conclusion to which he comes, that it was to purge the church of this bad leaven, that the providence of God again exposed

* Milman, Hist. of Christianity, vol. ii., p. 260.

† It is perhaps worth recording, that one of the persons taken into the household of Diocletian was a Presbyter of the church in Antioch, by name Dorotheus. He was well versed in profane as well as sacred literature, to which he added a knowledge of Hebrew; and the Emperor was so pleased with him, that he gave him the honourable and probably lucrative post of presiding over the establishment for preparing purple dye at Tyre. (Burton; see also Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. vii., cap. 32.)

‡ Mosheim, Commentaries, vol. iii., p. 207

it to the purge of persecution.* The more flourishing and extensive the community, the more the pride; perhaps the temporal advantages of superiority predominated over the Christian motives, which led men to aspire to the supreme functions in the church. Sacerdotal domination began to exercise its awful powers, and the Bishop to assume the language and the authority of the vicegerent of God. Feuds distracted the bosom of peaceful communities, and disputes occasionally proceeded to open violence, so as to render them the prey of intestine wars; congregation was set in array against congregation, and Pastors against Pastors; whilst fraud and dissimulation were on every side carried to an alarming extent.† The comparatively inconsiderable persecution which at the first affected the soldiers and servants of the palace had no apparent effect in restraining and correcting these evils. By an unfortunate delusion, or waywardness, the Christians seem rather to have been led to add crime to crime; and their Pastors, so far from permitting the mild and healing influence of Christianity to exert itself in assuaging their mutual heats, affected more the character of despotic rulers or tyrants, and assumed to themselves, in various other things, a licence no less incompatible with the respectability than with the sacred duties of their office. It is necessary that all these things should be taken into consideration by those who may be desirous of ascertaining the causes that gave rise to the very heavy persecution which took place a short time subsequently to the period of which we are now treating.‡ Such is the melancholy confession of the Christians themselves, who, according to the spirit of the times, considered the dangers and afflictions to which they were exposed in the light of divine judgments, and deplored, perhaps with something of the exaggeration of religious humiliation, the visible decay of holiness and peace.§

Diocletian was the son of a slave, or of obscure and doubtful parentage; and that he forced his way to sovereign power, and conceived, and actually accomplished, the project of re-constructing the empire, betokens him to have been a man of strong political courage, of profound, if not always of wise and statesmanlike, views: he reigned for a longer period than any Emperor since the days of Hadrian, and furnished more matter, though of a painful kind, for the ecclesiastical historian than any of his predecessors. He assumed the new title of Dominus or Lord, which gave considerable

* Stebbing, History of the Christian Church, vol. i., p. 121.

† "But as commonly the nature of all men, being of itself unruly and untoward, always seeketh and desireth prosperity, and yet can never well use prosperity; always would have peace, and yet having peace always abuseth the same: so here, likewise, it happened with these men, who through this so great liberty and prosperity of life began to degenerate and languish into idleness and delicacy, and one to work spite and contumely against another, striving and contending amongst themselves, for every occasion, with railing words after most despiteful manner; Bishops against Bishops, and people against people, moving hatred and sedition one against another; besides, also, cursed hypocrisy and simulation, with all extremity increasing more and more. By reason whereof, the judgment of God, after his wonted manner, (the multitude of the faithful as yet meeting in their assemblies,) began by little and little to visit the people with persecution, falling first upon the brethren who were abroad in warfare." (Foxe.)

‡ Mosheim, Commentaries, vol. iii., p. 207.

§ Milman, History of Christianity, vol. ii., p. 261.

umbrage to the servile and flexible religion of his pagan subjects. The necessity of the state appeared also to require the active and perpetual presence of more than one person invested with sovereign authority, who might organize the decaying forces of the different divisions of the empire, against the menacing hosts of barbarians on every frontier. His first care, therefore, was to give the title of Cæsar to Maximianus Herculeus, which was almost equivalent to associating him with himself in the kingdom. Diocletian preferred Nicomedia, in Bithynia, as a place of residence; and in the year 286 he gave the title of Augustus to Maximian, and admitted him as his colleague in authority and power. The Emperor constantly entertained the notion, ever dear to the heart of the Roman statesman, that the glory of the empire was necessarily connected with the old state religion, and that one could not possibly exist without the other: while he wished to renew the former splendour of the Roman name, he conceived it to be necessary to re-vivify the ancient Heathenism, which was daily and manifestly sinking into neglect, and to extirpate the Christian faith, which was spreading wider and wider, and threatening to attain universal sway. By these principles Diocletian appears to have been governed, which failed not to constitute him an enemy and persecutor of Christianity. At present, however, no public document prejudicial to the interests of the church was put forth; and if the Christians suffered in the midst of the civil and military movements which were taking place, it was without the consent, or at least without any positive command, of the Emperors. Some martyrdoms are mentioned about this time in Lycia, and several in Rome; but the Emperors were not present, and these are rather to be considered as insulated events, resulting from the cruelty or the caprice of some particular Magistrate, or from a temporary ebullition of popular feeling.*

Herculeus, the colleague of Diocletian in the empire, was a bitter opponent of the Christian church, and eagerly embraced every opportunity of testifying his zeal in the cause of idolatry. Among the first who suffered in this reign† were Primus and Felician, two

* Burton, Lect. on Eccles. Hist., lect. xxviii.

† "We find," says Mosheim, "many martyrdoms recorded by Roman Catholic writers, as having taken place both in Gaul and at Rome, as well as in various other quarters, during the early part of the reign of Diocletian, to which all the more early Christian historians appear to have been entire strangers; and more particularly Eusebius (Hist. Eccles., lib. viii., cap. 1) expressly represents the Christian church as having, during the first eighteen years of Diocletian's reign, enjoyed a season of such perfect tranquillity, that it may almost be said to have been freed from every apprehension of danger. By way of justifying themselves as to this, the Romish writers to whom we allude, contend, either that Eusebius was better acquainted with the affairs of the eastern than the western church; or, that the martyrdoms in question were passed over by the early Christian historians without notice, in consequence of their not having been authorized by any public imperial mandate, but merely by the private orders of Maximian Herculeus. Now, with regard to this explanation, I can certainly have no objection to any one's acquiescing in it, to whom it may appear satisfactory; but at the same time I must claim for myself the freedom of remarking, that all the accounts which have been given of these martyrdoms appear to me to wear a very questionable aspect. The whole of them are, in fact, derived from certain Martyrologies and Acts, on which those who are in the habit of giving credit to none but determinate and approved authorities will not easily place any reliance. No one can be ignorant that the Martyrologies

brothers, and natives of the city of Rome, whose religion seems to have been their only crime. When they were brought before the tribunal, they boldly confessed their faith; and upon refusing to sacrifice, they were ordered to be scourged; after which they were sent to Nomentum, about twelve miles from the capital, where Promotus, the Governor, was ordered to use them as the enemies of the gods; and with great exactness he executed this commission: his severity, however, only strengthened their constancy and resolution. On their examination, the responses which they gave proved that with them there was indeed "one Lord, one faith, one baptism." The Governor, irritated at their intrepidity, imagined that the courage which they had shown proceeded from their having been together; but if they were separated from each other, they might with facility be overcome. This scheme was tried. Promotus forthwith began with Felician, who was about fourscore years old, supposing that his age, and numerous infirmities, would readily yield to his suggestions. After a variety of torments employed to no purpose, and vain exhortations, advising him to pay some regard to his old age, he was tied to a post in the prison, where he remained three days without sustenance, that he might ultimately accept relief on any terms. In the meantime, Primus was summoned before the Governor, and mendaciously told that his brother had obeyed the orders of the Emperor, and had saved his life, and he was advised to follow his example. He was evidently unmoved by the report, manifesting confidence that he had been preserved from falling. The Judge, therefore, endeavoured to overcome him by torments; but finding him steadfastly fixed in the faith, he at length commanded them to be beheaded. Marcus and Marcellianus suffered about the same time: they were brothers, and natives of Rome, and of noble descent: their father, whose name was Tranquillinus, held some considerable post in the court of Diocletian. He, with his wife, was a Heathen; but committed the education of their sons to those who instructed them in the principles of Christianity, and employed themselves in providing for them according to the station which they occupied in society. The brothers were married when they were apprehended on account of their religion; for though the Emperor, and his colleague Herculeus, had as yet issued no edict against the Christian faith, the pagan priesthood, and others interested in the heathen theology, caused several to suffer as martyrs, by bringing into operation obsolete, but unrepealed, laws of the empire, which respected all innovations in the worship recognised by the people. Marcus and his brother were committed to prison, where they were visited by Sebastian, an officer of the imperial house-

made use of in some churches are of the most dubious and uncertain character, having been chiefly compiled from old, vague, and obscure reports; nor are the traditions that have in various places been current for several centuries, at all more entitled to respect. Of the accounts now extant of the saints and martyrs of the first three centuries, under the title of their 'Acts,' how very few there are that can be considered as genuine, or free from suspicion, may be learned from Ruinart, who undertook to make a collection of them, and certainly did collect together all that he could of them. The volume, as he published it, is but of a moderate size; and small and slender indeed would have been its bulk, had he admitted nothing but what was altogether unexceptionable." (Mosheim's Commentaries.)

hold, and a Christian: after they had continued some time in confinement, they were exposed to severe torture, and afterwards condemned to lose their heads. Their parents procured the postponement of the sentence for a month, during which time they anticipated inducing them to abandon the faith; and for this purpose they were removed to the house of Nicostratus, the public Registrar. It was there that Tranquillinus and Marcia, accompanied by the wives and children of their sons, attempted their constancy by all the endearing and affectionate persuasions which a sorrow-stricken family could urge; until Sebastian, perceiving that his friends began to soften so far as to deliberate on the case, came opportunely to their relief, by cogent arguments to perseverance and constancy: this was accompanied by the conversion of their parents and families, and also of Nicostratus, their keeper. When the period of their respite terminated, Chromatius, the Prefect, sent for Tranquillinus, the father, to give him an account of the progress he had made in his endeavours to make his sons abjure the faith: we are informed, that by his conversation the Magistrate became a convert to Christianity, liberated his prisoners, resigned his office, and retired into the country. Castulus, an officer of the household, concealed Marcus and Marcellianus in his own apartments in the palace, until they were betrayed by Torquatus, and, being arrested, were ordered to instant execution.*

Intimately connected with the above, we have information of Zoe and Tranquillinus, who are said to have suffered martyrdom in 286. Zoe was the wife of Nicostratus, mentioned above; and being present out of curiosity during one of the visits of Sebastian to the prison, her heart was so powerfully affected with the force of the truth, that she fell at his feet, and entreated to be taught the way of God more perfectly. As paralysis had deprived her of the power of speech, she could only make her desires known by her gestures; but Sebastian, deeply affected by her miserable condition, not only granted her request, but instructed her to pray to God that, as a proof of the truth of what she had heard, she might recover her speech: the Almighty was pleased to hear her prayer, so that the neophyte is said to have declared, in a distinct and audible manner, her full persuasion of the truth of all that she had heard. Nicostratus, finding his wife thus miraculously healed, made confession of the same faith; and Sebastian, thus encouraged, further instructed them in the principles of Christianity, and the duties of the disciples of Christ, on which they manifested an earnest desire to be admitted to baptism, which was administered. The conversion of this family created such an uproar, that there was no security for them or their friends in their own habitations: they were therefore obliged to take shelter, in company with Marcus and Marcellianus, in the apartments of Castulus. Here they spent their time in prayer and mutual exhortation, until

* Fabian, who had succeeded Chromatius as Prefect, condemned them to be bound to two pillars, with their feet nailed to them. In this posture they remained a day and a night, and on the following day were pierced with lances, and buried in the Arenarium, since called their cemetery, or catacombs, two miles out of Rome, between the Appian and Ardeatine roads.

the greatest part of the hallowed company obtained the martyr's crown. Zoe appears to have been the first who suffered, after the former two: she was apprehended while in the act of prayer, and was strongly urged to sacrifice to Mars; she refused with a resolution becoming a Christian; and, having professed an utter contempt of Paganism, and implicit confidence in Christ, she was cast into a murky dungeon, and prohibited from having either light or sustenance, being constantly threatened with a lingering death, unless she would worship the gods of the empire. Fabian being made acquainted with her firm and inflexible demeanour, ordered her to be hung upon a tree, and under her a straw fire to be kindled, in which position she expired. Tranquillinus, ashamed to hear of the stronger sex overcome by the weaker, made an open confession of the faith, was stoned to death, and thrown into the Tiber.

Tiburtius was a native of Rome, and descended from a family of some distinction in the city. His father, Chromatius, as some assert, was Governor of Rome; others declare that he was only a deputy, or Vice-Governor: be that as it may, this appears certain, that he was a Judge for trying the causes, and passing sentence upon such as were accused of being Christians, in the commencement of the reign of Diocletian. Having passed sentence upon the two sons of Tranquillinus, and having, at the request of the parent, vouchsafed a short respite, the Most High rendered this act of mercy instrumental in the manifestation of the glory of his grace. Chromatius instituted a rigid inquiry into the truth of Christianity, which terminated in his conversion: he then sent for Polycarp, a Priest, and requested baptism; and engaged, also, that his son Tiburtius should take the same step. The initiatory rite in respect of the father was for some special reason deferred; but his son having renounced all hopes of worldly preferment, and everything that would interfere with the duties of Christianity, he was forthwith accepted and baptized. Chromatius at once relinquished the office which he had held, and allowed all the new converts to take shelter under his roof, where they remained secure for some time. Apprehensive, however, that it would be impossible for him to conceal his change much longer, he applied to the Emperor for permission to retire to his estate in Campania for the benefit of his health. Having obtained his request, he acquainted Caius, then Bishop of Rome, that he was disposed to take his new family with him, and all whose faith and courage might suffer by being exposed to the trial at Rome. The Prelate approved of the proposal, and sent Polycarp the Priest with them. Tiburtius remained in Rome, where he took all prudent measures for his own security, and assembled in the apartments of one of the officers of the Emperor's household, with other Christians. But their tranquillity was soon disturbed by Torquatus, who, being offended at the liberty which Tiburtius had taken in reproving him for his faults, accused him to Fabian the Prefect, who, after several interrogatories, commanded him to offer incense to the idol-deities, or to walk barefoot over burning coals. The martyr chose the latter, which, it is said, he accomplished without injury. The Magistrate, uninfluenced

by the supernatural interposition, and imputing his escape to the effects of magic, pronounced sentence of death upon him.

In the army of Rome the Christians and the Heathens were placed in constant opposition, which frequently manifested itself in numerous overt acts of oppression and cruelty, which prognosticated a general persecution. Nowhere, as Mr. Milman justly observes, did the old Roman religion retain so much hold upon the mind as among the sacred eagles. Without sacrifice to the givers of victory, the superstitious soldiery would advance, divested of their usual confidence, against the enemy, and defeat was ascribed to some impious omission in the ceremonial of propitiating the gods. The Christians now formed no unimportant part of the army: though permitted by the ruling authorities to abstain from idolatrous conformity, their contempt of the auspices which promised, and of the rites which insured, the divine favour, would be looked upon with equal awe and animosity. The unsuccessful General, and the routed army, would equally seize every excuse to cover the misconduct of the one, or the cowardice of the other. In the pride of victory, the present deities of Rome would share the honour with Roman valour: the assistance of the Christians would be forgotten in defeat; the resentment of the gods, to whom that defeat would be attributed, would be ascribed to the impiety of their godless comrades. An instance of this kind took place, during one of his campaigns, in the presence of Diocletian. The army was assembled around the altar, the sacrificing Priest in vain sought for the accustomed signs in the entrails of the victim; the sacrifice was again and again repeated; but always with the same result. The baffled soothsayer, trembling with awe or with indignation, denounced the presence of profane strangers. The Christians had been seen, perhaps boasted that they had made the sign of the cross, and put to flight the impotent demons of idolatrous worship. They were apprehended, and commanded to sacrifice; and a general edict issued, that all who refused to pay honour to the martial deities of Rome should be expelled the army.* Herculeus was the most ferocious of tyrants; of which the martyrdom of the Theban Legion would furnish the strongest proof, if the several accounts of it could be received as authentic. It may be said to have taken place about the year 286,† when Herculeus was on his march into Gaul; and one entire legion in his army is stated to have been composed of Christians. While they were encamped in a narrow defile,

* Milman, History of Christianity, vol. ii., p. 271.

† "Insensible to pity, and fearless of consequences, he was the ready instrument of every act of cruelty which the policy of that artful Prince, Diocletian, might at once suggest and disclaim. As soon as a bloody sacrifice had been offered to prudence or to revenge, Diocletian, by his seasonable intercession, saved the remaining few, whom he had never designed to punish, gently censured the severity of his stern colleague, and enjoyed the comparison of a golden and an iron age, which was universally applied to their opposite maxims of government. Notwithstanding the difference of their characters, the two Emperors maintained on the throne that friendship which they had contracted in a private station. The haughty, turbulent spirit of Maximian, so fatal afterwards to himself, and to the public peace, was accustomed to respect the genius of Diocletian, and confessed the ascendant of reason over brutal violence." (Gibbon, Decline and Fall.)

not far from the head of the lake of Geneva, and now called St. Maurice, from one of these soldiers; Herculeus ordered this legion to be decimated for resistance to some orders which no Christian could comply with. The history of the affair is as follows:—Herculeus, entering Gaul for the purpose of repressing some disturbances that had arisen, and having crossed the Alps, he, in order to take the field under more favourable auspices, gave directions for a general lustration of his forces, and that the whole army should join in swearing fidelity at the altars of their gods. With these orders of the Emperor, the Theban Legion, under the command of Mauritius, which had shortly before been called from the East, refused to comply.* Enraged at their resistance, Herculeus caused them to be decimated; that is, he ordered one soldier out of every ten to be put to death. The remainder continuing firm, the decimation was repeated; and still finding their constancy proof against all this severity, he caused them all to be put to death. Mauritius, and his associates in command, exerted themselves incessantly to keep up the spirits and resolution of their men; and after the execution of the second sentence of decimation, sent a remonstrance to the Emperor, which shows, if authentic, how genuine were both the piety and loyalty of these heroic Christians, and how clearly they understood the nature of their duty to God, and their temporal Sovereign. "We are your soldiers, Sire," said they; "but we are also the servants of God, and we willingly confess that we glory in being so. We owe to you service in war; but we are bound to appear innocent before God. From you we receive pay; from Him, life; and we cannot obey you, when to do so would be to renounce God our Creator and our Lord, and yours also, though you thus obstinately refuse to acknowledge him. If you demand of us nothing that is contrary to his decrees, we will obey you as heretofore: if you do otherwise, we must obey him rather than you. We offer to expose ourselves to any of your enemies, whosoever they may be; but we cannot believe that it would be lawful for us to dip our hands in the blood of the innocent. We were bound by an oath to God, before we swore allegiance to you; and you would have good reason to doubt our fidelity did you find us violating so sacred a pledge. You command us to pursue the Christians, that they may be taken and punished: behold us! we confess our belief in God the Father of us all, and in his Son Jesus Christ. We have seen our

* This company received the name of Theban Legion from their having been raised in Thebes, or Thebais. They had been stationed in the East, till Herculeus professed to need their aid in Gaul to put down the peasants of that country, who, under the appellation of *Bagaudæ*, had risen in a general insurrection, very similar to those which in the fourteenth century successively afflicted both France and England. When they came to Rome, they were confirmed in the faith by the Bishop of that city, and promised, upon oath, that they would rather be slain by their enemies than forsake the faith; after which they followed the army over the Alps, under the command of Mauritius, Exuperius, and Candidus, their chief officers, men as renowned for their piety as for their valour. The body of the soldiers halted for a short time for refreshment, while some detachments were forwarded to Treves and Cologne. At this time, the Emperor commanded a general sacrifice to be offered to the heathen deities for the success of their expedition, requiring all the troops, both of the East and West, to attend, and proposed to them taking such oaths as were incompatible with Christianity; a part of which included, that they should persecute the Christians as enemies to the national gods.

companions suffer without complaining; but have rejoiced, rather, at their being allowed the honour of dying for their God, and our God. Neither the injustice with which they have been treated, nor the menaces hurled against us, have been sufficient to make us revolt. We have still our arms; but we resist not, for we would rather die innocent, than live with guilt." But no declaration of loyalty, no demonstration of the most honourable adherence to principle, could make any impression on the mind of Herculeus; and, perceiving the inflexible character of the converted legion, he resolved upon its immediate and entire destruction.* To effect this sanguinary purpose, says the tradition, he directed a considerable body of troops to surround it, and to put every man to the sword. The Christians, on being made acquainted with the Emperor's intentions, awaited their fate with resignation; and when they saw the regiments approaching which were ordered to act as their executioners, they laid down their arms, and fell passive victims to the edict of their barbarous Sovereign.†

Notwithstanding the great activity which Diocletian and Herculeus manifested in the government of the empire, and especially in the progress of their arms against the Persians and Germans, new opponents were perpetually arising, who created considerable annoyance and danger. Carausius had declared himself Emperor in Britain, in reference to whom the associated Princes met in consultation, and resolved upon adopting vigorous measures. They terminated, however, at the commencement of the campaign in favour of the insurgent, so that Herculeus found it necessary to make peace with him, and ignominiously to allow him the assumption of the imperial title. In addition to this, a fresh competitor appeared in Egypt, in the person of Achilleus. Affairs beginning to wear an aspect so serious, the two Emperors met again at Milan for mutual conversation; and determined to strengthen their powers of aggression by calling to their help two individuals, on whom they imposed the title of Cæsar. These were Constantius Chlorus, and Galerius Valerius Maximianus. Constantius took the command in Gaul, having first divorced his wife Helena,‡ and married Theodora, the step-daughter of Herculeus.

* Such is the substance of the account now extant, under the title of "Passio sanctorum Mauritii ac sociorum ejus," which is said to have been compiled by Eucherius, Bishop of Lyons, in the sixth century; and is to be found, accompanied with a learned introduction and notes, in Ruinart's "Acta Martyrum Sincera et Selecta," p. 271, *et seq.* Fol., 1713. And it may be remarked, that, notwithstanding the zeal that has occasionally been displayed by the adversaries of the Church of Rome, in reducing within as narrow limits as possible the very extensive catalogue of its martyrs, by none of them, with the exception of one or two, was any attack, previously to the commencement of the eighteenth century, ever made on the history of the Theban, or, as it is not unusually, by way of distinction, termed, "the happy, or fortunate, legion." Nor is there anything in this that should occasion much surprise, when it is considered that scarcely any other history of this kind has come down to us so well supported by ancient documents and testimonies. (Mosheim's Commentaries.) "Such is the story," says Dr. Burton, "of the Theban legion, which it is difficult, if not impossible, to receive in all its details; but which may have some foundation in fact; and the local tradition is certainly extremely ancient."

† Stebbing, History of the Christian Church, vol. i., p. 126.

‡ Helena was the mother of Constantine the Great. She was born of obscure parents in Bithynia. When divorced by the marriage of her husband with Theodora,

At the same time he sent his son, Constantine, who was now sixteen years old, to attend upon Diocletian at Nicomedia; and though he was treated in a manner suited to his rank, and had the advantage of gaining military experience, the young Prince was, in fact, kept as a hostage for the good conduct of his father. Galerius at the same time married Valeria, the daughter of Diocletian, and took the command in Illyria. Herculeus had Africa and Italy, while Diocletian protected the eastern part of the empire, including Egypt, residing principally at Nicomedia. In this division of the country, the government of Britain fell to Constantius; but he was occupied in Gaul some years. In the meantime Carausius was killed by Allectus, who himself assumed the title of Emperor. In 296 Allectus was defeated and killed, and Constantius then passed over into the island.* About the same time Diocletian succeeded in recovering Egypt, having slain the usurper Achilleus.†

The sanguinary act of Herculeus, with regard to the Theban Legion, rekindled the persecution in Gaul, and many suffered. Among several are enumerated Faith, Capracius, and Quintin; of whom a brief notice will be recorded. Faith was a native of Aquitaine, who from her infancy was instructed in the principles of the Christian faith, and brought up in a manner which accorded with the opulence of her parents. When Herculeus afflicted the Christians in Gaul, Aquitaine was governed by Dacian, who was a great devotee to the superstitious ceremonies of Paganism, and servilely devoted to his master's will. This Magistrate was extremely active in apprehending the professors of Christianity, and in endeavouring to persuade them to renounce the faith. He resided in the same place as our martyr, whose reputation among the Christians constituted her the peculiar object of his aversion and hate: she was speedily informed of the dangerous circumstances which were gathering, and being persuaded that she could not be long concealed, prayed to be divinely assisted, and then surrendered herself to the officers. Being brought before the Governor, he employed both promises and threats to induce her to relinquish the Christian profession; but finding his efforts to be

she retired from the court; but the elevation of her son to the throne restored her to the honours of her rank, which she adorned by devotion and Christian charity. She was the founder of various churches; and in her travels into the Holy Land, she is said to have discovered the true cross. She died in the arms of her son, A.D. 328, and was interred in the imperial mausoleum at Rome.

* "In the third year of the reign of Diocletian, Carausius, a person of no extraction, but of great courage and abilities, and of an enterprising temper, gave Diocletian some trouble in Britain. This Carausius had been ordered to guard the coasts against the Franks and Saxons: misbehaving himself in his post, and being suspected of holding a correspondence with the enemy, he was ordered to be executed by Herculeus, who was now raised by Diocletian to a partnership in the empire. Carausius, having notice of this order, assumed the purple in his own defence, and set up for himself; and, seizing upon Britain, held it seven years, maintaining his ground with great conduct and resolution; but at last was assassinated by Allectus, a friend of his, whom he had used with the greatest confidence, and trusted with the main of his affairs. This Allectus usurped the island three years, and was then slain in the field by the Prefect Asclepiodotus, who commanded under Constantius Chlorus. And thus, after ten years' revolt, Britain was recovered to the Roman Emperors." (Collier, Eccles. Hist. of Great Britain.)

† Burton, Lect. on Eccles. Hist., lect. xxviii.; see also Bede, Eccles. Hist. of the English Nation, lib. i., cap. 6.

ineffectual, he commanded her to be laid on the iron-bed, or gridiron, over a slow fire; which cruel and lingering torture she endured with a fortitude bordering upon cheerfulness, which so influenced several of the spectators, that they embraced the faith, and, young as they were in the profession of truth, they were enabled to meet death with intrepidity and courage. Capracius appears to have been one of those who fled when the storm first broke out in Gaul; but hearing of the constancy of the before-mentioned martyr, he addressed himself to God, that he might obtain a similar victory. Being carried before the Governor, he made a full confession, and was laden with irons. The Magistrate, perceiving him to be young, and adequate for the service of his country, attempted his fidelity by the offer of a considerable post at court: he, however, rejected every proposal, but that of dying for his faith, from which he could not be removed; declaring that his imperial Majesty had nothing to bestow, in comparison of what he anticipated from the Most High whom he served. Dacian, being unable to overcome his constancy, delivered him over to the executioners, with directions for them to try the utmost power of their torments upon him. The Governor, finding that all his efforts tended only to increase the number and fortitude of the faithful, ordered Capracius to be beheaded, extending this sentence to others who had recently embraced the truth on beholding the indomitable courage of those who had suffered in maintaining it. Quintin appears to have been a native of Rome, and descended from a senatorian family; but the records of his personal history are scanty, until we find him engaged in the publication of the Gospel. Being desirous of preaching the word among the Heathen in Gaul, he left his country, and all hope of temporal advantage, and, in company with one Lucian, arrived in Picardy, where they for some time preached the faith together. In process of time they separated: Quintin prosecuted his mission in that part of the country: his companion went to Beauvois, where he is said to have received the crown of martyrdom. Although we are not acquainted with any consecutive or detailed account of the actions of Quintin, we are nevertheless enabled to say, that God made him powerful both in words and deeds, and that he received the reward of his labours in this reign. Herculeus having appointed Rectius Varus his Prefect, he proved himself to be on an equality with his Sovereign in acts of superstition and cruelty, and executed the whole of his designs against the Christians with ardour and fidelity. Varus being in Gallia Secunda, or the Farther Gaul, heard of the great success which attended the ministrations of Quintin; and, being incensed at the progress of Christianity, he formed a resolution to destroy its Preacher, but deferred the execution of it until the affairs of state brought him to Amiens. On his arrival he ordered Quintin to be arrested, thrown into prison, and placed in irons; and on the following day he was brought before the Governor, who attempted to subdue his fidelity by promises and threats; but finding him proof against both, he ordered him to be severely scourged, and then confined him to a close dungeon, without the liberty of receiving any comfort or assistance from his friends. The

writer of his Acts asserts, but upon what authority we know not, that a martyr was miraculously set at liberty that night, and found preaching to the people the following morning, which prodigy is said to have proved the conversion of many; but the Prefect, ascribing it to the power of magic, issued a second order to apprehend him, and endeavoured by certain violent methods to shake his resolution, but with as little success as before. He then ordered him to be stretched with pulleys, until his joints were dislocated, after which his body was torn with scourges composed of wire; boiling pitch and oil were poured down his back, and lighted torches were applied to his sides and arm-pits; but being strengthened by Him whose cause he defended, he was superior to all the cruel arts of his barbarous persecutor, and was kept in a state of holy tranquillity and patience; and, finding him unable to be overcome, the Governor remanded him to prison. Shortly after Varus being obliged to journey to Vermandois, he ordered Quintin to be conducted thither under a strong guard, where he expired under the hands of his executioners. His remains were carefully watched until the evening to prevent their interment, and were then ignominiously thrown into the Somme.

The heresies which at the close of the third century infested the church operated in some degree to increase the prejudices of Diocletian against the Christians. Manicheism had made considerable progress in Egypt; and, on account of its Eastern origin, the Emperor, having found difficulty in subduing Persia by his arms, was afraid that they were about to inundate the world with a new and dangerous doctrine. In a letter which Diocletian addressed to Julianus, the Proconsul of Africa, against the Manichees,* are numerous passages which were greatly calculated to cause alarm among the Christians. In this epistle, also, mention is made of the old religion having been supplanted by a new one, and of the criminality of suffering established usages to fall into decay or desuetude, and orders were given that all persons professing Manicheism should suffer capitally, that their books should be burnt, and their property confiscated; but if any of them were high in rank or station, their property should be seized, and themselves sent to work in the mines;† a movement which fully harmonized with the Empe-

* Baronii Annales, ad ann. 287.

† Manes, or Manichæus, the founder of the sect of the Manichees, flourished about the year 270. He was a native of Persia, but not born in a condition of slavery, as some have maintained. He is represented to have been a man of considerable learning, and to have been, while yet young, ordained a Christian Priest; but afterwards falling into heresy, he was expelled from the church, and favourably received at the court of Sapor, King of Persia. That Prince listened to Manes so far as the doctrine of the two principles is concerned; but when he proceeded to introduce his peculiar notions of Christianity into the religion of his country, he lost the favour of the Monarch, and was obliged to retire into Turkistan. On the death of Sapor, he returned to court, and was well received by Hormisdas, the new Monarch. This reign only lasted two years; and though his son Varanes was inclined at first to favour Manes, he was compelled to give way to the calumnies and jealousies which existed against him; and, after a public conference, in which, as might have been supposed, Manes was defeated, he was put to death, either by crucifixion or by excoriation, A.D. 277. The charge that he impiously pretended to be himself the Messiah, or the Holy Ghost, is now regarded as an unfounded calumny; indeed, it is more than probable, that the circumstance of his name, signifying "comforter," alone gave rise to the latter part of the accusation. The doctrine of Manes was a motley mixture of the tenets of Christianity with the

ror's subsequent operations against the church. About this time a new heresy appeared in Egypt, which was founded by a man named Hieracas, or Hierax.* He professed himself a Christian; but his Egyptian education had led him to study astrology and magic, to which he added an acquaintance with the literature and philosophy of Greece. The Manichæan doctrines which were now becoming popular soon attracted his notice. He prohibited marriage, and the use of animal food, in which he followed the more rigorous of the Manichees; although there is reason to think that Manes did not impose this abstinence upon all his followers. Hierax appears to have borrowed largely from the Gnostics; and, with respect to the nature of the Son of God, he had a notion peculiarly his own, which tended to a denial of the eternal existence of the Son. His followers were called after him, Hieracitæ; and they were likely to be numerous, when we find Manichæism so widely spread as to attract the notice of the Government; and when we remember that many persons in Egypt had from a long period been following an ascetic or monastic life. It does not, however, follow, that Hierax adopted the doctrinal as well as the practical principles of the Manichees; and if the Christians were confounded with the Hieracitæ, or with the Manichees, there was likely at that time to be a revival of the ancient prejudices against them.†

Until now there had been many Christians in the army, both in the higher and lower ranks, and they had never been compelled to do anything against their conscience. This is clearly shown, says Neander, from what is related by Eusebius, as well as from a remarkable circumstance which, as we can determine with certainty from the name of the Consul given in a narration prepared by eye-witnesses, took place in the year 295. It is one of the instances of an absolute refusal of a part of the Christians to enter into military service, on the plea that it was, by its very nature, incompatible with their religion; instances which, although their force was weakened by many others on the opposite side of the question, might very easily serve as an argument to the enemies of Christianity to support their assertion, that Christianity was detrimental to the state. At Sevesta, in Numidia, a young man of the name of Maximilian was brought before the Proconsul, as bound to serve in the army: as he entered, and was about to be measured, to see if he had the stature required, he declared at once, "I cannot be a soldier; I can do nothing wicked: I am a Christian." The Proconsul, without noticing his protestations, coolly ordered him to be measured, and, when he was found to

ancient philosophy of the Persians. He combined these two systems, and applied and accommodated to Jesus Christ the characters and actions which the Persians attributed to the god Mithras. He established two principles; namely, a good and an evil one: the first, a most pure and subtle matter, which he called "light," did nothing but good; and the second, a gross and corrupt substance, which he called "darkness," nothing but evil. This philosophy is very ancient; and Plutarch treats of it at large in his Isis and Osiris.

* Hieracites, heretics in the third century, so called from their leader Hierax, a philosopher of Egypt, who taught that Melchisedek was the Holy Ghost, denied the Resurrection, and condemned marriage. (Henderson.)

† Burton, Lect. on Eccles. Hist., lect. xxviii.

be of the standard height, said to him, "Let them put the insignia of the military service round your neck, and become a soldier;" without taking any further notice of his profession of Christianity. The young man said, "I will bear no such badge: I bear already the badge of Christ, my God." The Proconsul, who was a Heathen, sarcastically threatened him, "I will send you instantly to your Christ." The young man said, "I hope you may: this would be a glory to me." The Proconsul, without further debate, ordered them to put the soldier's leaden badge upon his neck. The young man struggled against this, and answered in the ardour of youthful faith indeed, but perhaps with some deficiency of Christian humility and consideration, "I will not take upon me the badge of the world's service; and if it be put upon me, I will break it; for it is unavailing. I cannot bear this leaden token about my neck, after once receiving the saving badge of our Lord Jesus, of whom ye know nothing, who died for us." The Proconsul, though a cold heathen Statesman, showed, nevertheless, humanity in this instance, by endeavouring to persuade the young man by kind arguments: he himself endeavoured to represent to him, that he might become a soldier without violating his duty as a Christian; that there were Christians, who performed military service without scruples, in the body-guards of all the four Emperors, Diocletian, Herculeus, Constantius Chlorus, and Galerius. However, as this young man of one-and-twenty years of age would not submit his own conviction to the example of others, he was sentenced to death; yet, in his sentence of death,* no notice was taken of his Christianity, and his non-compliance with the duty of military service was alleged as the only ground. This is a clear proof, that the soldiers, also, might openly profess their Christianity; and that if they would only fulfil their other duties, it would not be expected of them to participate in heathen ceremonies.†

This state of affairs did not last long. Toward the end of the century, Diocletian practising the superstitious rites of divination, and understanding or guessing from the ill success of his sacrifices, that the presence of a Christian servant was the cause, ordered not only those who were present, but all in his palace, to sacrifice, and in case of refusal to be scourged with whips. He wrote, also, to the officers of the army, to constrain every soldier to sacrifice, or to discharge the disobedient from the service. Possibly the festival of the fifteenth year, the nomination of Maximianus Herculeus to the imperial dignity, the "dies natalis Cæsaris," in the year 298, was selected for the purpose of issuing such a command to the army; for this time would be exactly adapted for that object, as sacrifices and feasts would be held for the celebration of the festival in which all the soldiers might be compelled to participate. The result of this trial has been stated by Eusebius:—"Very many who were soldiers in the kingdom of Christ, without hesitating, preferred the confession of his name to that apparent glory and comfort which they enjoyed; and of these a few here

* "Eo quod indevoto animo sacramentum militiæ recusaverit, gladio animadverti placuit."

† Neander, History of the Christian Religion and Church, vol. i., p. 149.

and there exchanged their honours, not only for degradation, but even for death, for their perseverance in religion. These last, however, were not many, as the great instigator of these violent measures had, as yet, but moderately proceeded, and ventured only so far as to shed the blood of some only. The great number of the believers probably deterred, and caused him to shrink from a general attack upon all; but when he began to arm more openly, it is impossible to tell how many and how eminent those were that presented themselves, in every place and city and country, as martyrs in the cause of Christ."* The story of Marcellus is remarkable.† Mr. Gibbon, in his History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, endeavours to justify the death of this soldier, representing him as punished solely for desertion and military disobedience, as a mutineer, and deserving of severe castigation, thus suppressing or disguising the real facts of the case. The truth is, that the death of Marcellus was the effect of a partial and undisguised persecution: his conscience was not burdened with being a soldier,—for it was no uncommon thing at that time for a Christian to serve in the army,—but with the introduction of rules among the soldiery which were utterly subversive of the very name and principles of Christianity; for those who commanded the Christian soldiers to sacrifice, were aware that in so doing they compelled them to renounce the faith of Christ. An instance of this occurs in the case referred to, at Tingi, now Tangier, in Africa. When the festival in honour of the Emperor, after the pagan custom, was accompanied by sacrifices and banquets, the Centurion Marcellus stood up from the soldiers' table, and, throwing down his wand, his belt, and his arms, he declared, "From this moment I cease to serve your Emperors as a soldier: I despise praying to your gods of wood and stone, deaf and dumb idols. If the condition of a soldier require this, that one must offer sacrifice to the gods and to the Emperors, I throw away my wand and my belt. I renounce the colours, and I am a soldier no more." All that he had said and done was now associated, which amounted to this, that Marcellus had publicly cast away the military insignia, and that he had spoken before the whole people much that was injurious to the gods and the Emperors: he was consequently sentenced to death. Cassianus, the Registrar who recorded the sentence, exclaimed, that he was shocked at the injustice of it; and in the course of a month he also suffered.

These circumstances tended to prepare the way for more active measures against the church of Christ, of which Galerius was eminently the great instigator. His ambition had recently been gratified by a victorious campaign against Narseus, the King of Persia; and Diocletian, who had been afraid of facing the danger himself, felt alarm at the success of his son-in-law; and his fears led him to consent in some degree to those measures of severity which he had proposed with regard to the Christians. Galerius would gladly have enforced his orders by more sanguinary measures; but Diocletian did

* Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. viii., cap. 4.

† Ruinart., Acta Martyrum Sincera et Selecta, p. 302.

not fully consent to this, so that a Christian soldier might for a time make his option between resigning his commission, or abjuring his faith. The celebration of the accession of the Emperor doubtless gave numerous opportunities for insulting the Christians: nevertheless, the instances were few in which any were put to death, and indeed the letter of the edict did not of itself authorize such cruelty; but Magistrates may have executed it with more or less severity, according to their own feelings, and there is evidence of martyrdoms having taken place in Africa. This country was under the government of Herculeus, who had been gaining victories in Mauritania, at the same time that Galerius was pursuing his conquests in the East. Herculeus had the vices of Diocletian, such as his love of money and his sensuality, but with a more active and enterprising mind; and Galerius was likely to find him a willing assistant in his schemes against the Christians. Constantius was the only one of the four heads of the empire who did not take part in this cruelty.* Being engaged in the distant provinces of Gaul and Britain, he was probably not consulted when the edict was issued, and the names only of Diocletian and Herculeus would be affixed to it. Constantius did not execute it in the countries under his command; and with some few exceptions, with which he was not personally concerned, the Christians of those parts were as much unmolested as before. The case appears to have been otherwise at Rome. Caius, the Bishop of that see, died in 296, and escaped the painful scenes which Marcellinus, his successor, was called to witness. Evidence, also, of another species of persecution is forthcoming, and of which we find monuments in the present day. When Herculeus was at Carthage, he had some baths constructed upon a magnificent scale, which were called after his own name; and when he came to Rome shortly afterwards, he built some others equally splendid, which bore the name of Diocletian. The ruins of these enormous baths are still to be seen at Rome; and the interest which they excite is increased, when we read that they were raised by the labours of Christian soldiers,†

* Though Constantius Chlorus, who was a favourer of the Christians, had the government of Britain at this time, yet being no more than Cæsar, he was under the jurisdiction of Diocletian and Herculeus, and obliged to execute their orders: for, as Aurelius Victor observes, though the titles of Augustus and Cæsar were both names of sovereignty, yet the latter had more of sound than power in it, being perfectly under the command of him that was Augustus; and therefore, Lactantius says, (cap. ix.,) when Diocletian called Galerius Cæsar, after defeating the Persians, he replied in a question with some disgust, "Quousque Cæsar?" "How long must I be Cæsar?" meaning, he expected to be advanced to the supreme station of Augustus. Constantius, therefore, having no more than a subordinate command, when the Diocletian persecution came on, was forced to see some rigorous orders put in execution. This Lactantius informs us, (cap. xv.,) that "the edict against the Christians was sent to Constantius without asking his consent;" and he confesses, Constantius complied so far as to "pull down their churches." But his kindness, when declared Augustus, made the Christians willing to forget what they had suffered under him in other respects. From this observation we may conclude the persecution was general, till Diocletian and Herculeus resigned the empire. (Collier, Eccles. Hist., vol. i., p. 47.)

† Of these baths, which were the largest in Rome, little is to be said in description, although great fragments of the ancient building remain. Herculeus, when he returned from Africa, began them, and employed seven years in the work. He had distinguished himself very much in persecuting the Christians, and accordingly he ordered as many as he could find to work in the building. Some say that forty thousand Christians worked

who were condemned to these and other public works by Herculeus.*

All these premonitions of a general persecution with which the fourth century opens, did not affect the minds of the Christians at large: the spirit of prayer was not stirred up among them, a sign of protracted and inveterate decay in godliness. There was a secret and lamentable decline of the life and spirit and power of the Gospel. A philosophical kind of religion became exceedingly fashionable; and, from what we are enabled to gather from the writings of this period, the discourses of Christian Pastors were confessedly homilies on different points of morality, rather than sermons on those evangelical doctrines of justification by faith, the hearty conviction of sin, and the various influences of the Holy Spirit; on account of which we wonder not at the circumstances which followed. The Most High, who had exercised long patience, at length declared, in the dispensations of his providence, "Because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee." In the winter of 302 Diocletian and Galerius met at Nicomedia; and while their private conferences were supposed to relate to the affairs of the empire, they were engaged in preparing plans for the persecution of the Christians. Galerius was the prime mover: his mother, Romula,† was superstitiously devoted to Paganism, and endeavoured to have various kinds of sacrifices to accompany her in all her public entertainments. The Christians ever and anon declined her invitations; and, her pride being now wounded, she was incessant in urging her son to put down their enemies by force. Galerius had also his share of superstition, and employed every argument with his father-in-law that the former edict might be pursued with even severer measures. Diocletian at length consented to summon a Council, formed of some persons versed in the administration of the law, and some military men. Of these one

here. "Hence," says one of the antiquaries of Rome, "though all the other baths are destroyed, these, which were built by the hands of saints, are still preserved." He adds, that some of the bricks have been found with a cross marked upon them. (Burton, Description of the Antiquities, and other Curiosities of Rome, 8vo. edit., p. 296. Oxford, 1821.) "Ecclesiastical historians tell us, that these baths were erected during the tenth general persecution of the Christians. The soldiers who had embraced the religion were condemned to work here; and after having supported that fatigue for that space of seven years, many of them were cruelly put to death." (Lumisden, Remarks on the Antiquities of Rome, 4to., p. 205. London, 1797.)

* Burton, Lect. on Eccles. Hist., lect. xxviii. Baronii Annal. Eccles., A.D. 298.

† Lactantius says: "She was exceedingly superstitious, and was a votary of the gods of the mountains. Being of such a character, she made sacrifices almost every day, and she feasted her servants on the meat offered to idols: but the Christians of her family would not partake of these entertainments; and, while she feasted with the Gentiles, they continued in fasting and prayer. On this account she conceived ill-will against the Christians; and, by woman-like complaints, instigated her son, no less superstitious than herself, to destroy them. So, during the whole winter, Diocletian and Galerius held council together, at which no one else assisted; and it was the universal opinion, that their conferences respected the most momentous affairs of the empire. The old man long opposed the fury of Galerius; and showed how pernicious it would be to raise disturbances throughout the world, and to shed so much blood; that the Christians were wont with eagerness to meet death; and it would be enough for him to exclude persons of that religion from the Court and the army." (Lactant., De Mortib. Persecut., cap. 11.)

party was already notoriously hostile to Christianity, Hierocles, who was probably a member of this assembly. Diocletian, however, prolonged his resistance; and being old and infirm, and naturally timid, he had no wish to take the lives of his subjects. To give somewhat greater solemnity to the proceeding, and to identify their measures as much as possible with the cause of polytheism, it was determined to consult the oracle of Apollo at Miletus. The answer of the oracle might be anticipated; and Diocletian submitted to the irresistible and united authority of his friends, of Galerius, and of the god, and contented himself with moderating the severity of the edict. Galerius proposed that all who refused to sacrifice should be burnt alive. Diocletian stipulated that there should be no loss of life. The first edict issued against the Christians in this reign appeared early in the year 303.* It was, says Eusebius, the nineteenth year of the reign of Diocletian, and the month of Dystrus, called by the Romans March, in which the festival of our Saviour's passion was at hand, when the imperial edict was everywhere published to tear down the churches to the foundation, and to destroy the sacred Scriptures by fire. Such was the character of the primary manifesto; but it was not long before others were promulgated, in which it was decreed that all the Prelates, in every place, should first be committed to prison, and that afterward every method should be adopted to compel them to sacrifice to the pagan deities.†

It was about this time, and before the edict came into operation, that Sebastian suffered: he held a responsible situation in the court of Rome, and was a Captain in the Prætorian guards; but his employment in the imperial household could not draw him aside from his fidelity to the cause of the Redeemer. His prudence and sincerity, together with the urbanity for which he was distinguished, secured for him the attachment of the soldiers, and the esteem of all who were acquainted with him: he conducted himself as an apostle under the garb of a soldier; and when Christianity was beheld as "the offscouring of all things," he was instrumental in leading many to Him who is "the way, the truth, and the life;" confirmed and strengthened others in seasons of temptation and difficulty; and several he taught to despise suffering and death for the sake of Christ. His situation at court for a time secured him from any attempts being made against himself personally; but when Diocletian began to sweep his palace and his army of all who bore the Christian name, Sebastian was charged with being one of the chief supporters of those martyrs who pertained to the family of Castulus: he was of too great importance to be put to death without the express order of the Emperor: the Prætor therefore acquainted Diocletian with the defection of his officer; and insinuated that he was the abettor, if not the author, of the numerous disorders which had recently taken place in Rome; and that he, under the character of a Captain of the Guards, was sheltering an

* The accuracy of this date is proved by Pagi ad Baron, A.D. 302; Walchius, Dissert. de Christ. sub Dioclet. Persecut., sec. xvi., p. 51; Tillemont, Memoires, tom. iv., p. 515, *et seq.*

† Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. viii., cap. 2.

enemy both to the empire and to the gods. The Emperor summoned Sebastian into his presence, and bitterly reproached him with ingratitude in thus repaying his favour and confidence: he replied, by observing, that Christianity, so far from engaging him in any designs prejudicial to His Majesty, taught him, that it was impossible to give a greater proof of his fidelity to his Sovereign, than by supplicating the only true God for his preservation and success. The Emperor, being incensed at an answer so injurious to the gods he adored, ordered him immediately to be taken to the Campus Martius,* and tied to a post and shot with arrows. This sentence was executed, and the martyr was left for dead on the field. Some Christians, however, coming to the place of martyrdom with the intention of burying the body, found him with signs of life remaining. The wife of Castulus caused him to be conveyed privately to the Emperor's palace to the apartments of her husband, where with proper care, in process of time, he recovered; and the Christians, beholding him thus restored, besought him earnestly to seek safety in flight. He refused to do this; and when able to go out, he placed himself in the way of the Emperor, as he was proceeding to the temple, and addressed him boldly, and in strong terms, on the unreasonableness of his prejudice against the faith of Christ, and on the facility with which he credited the calumnies and falsehoods of the heathen priesthood, whose chief endeavour was to misrepresent the Christians, and to charge them with being the enemies of the state; although obliged, by the principles of their faith, to maintain inviolable loyalty to the person of the Emperor, and to pray for the prosperity of the empire. The freedom of the language of Sebastian, and especially of one whom Diocletian imagined he had caused to be put to death, not merely surprised but angered him: he therefore ordered him to be carried to a spot near his palace, and there beaten till he expired; and to prevent any future resuscitation, his body was thrown into the common sewer.

A day was chosen for the execution of the persecuting edict; and the time which elapsed from its issue, would allow it to be conveyed to several places before Easter. At Nicomedia, where the decree was first promulgated, and where Diocletian and Galerius were still staying, an earlier day was fixed. The feast called Terminalia † took place on the 23d of February, that festival which was inseparably connected with the stability of the Roman power; that power which was so manifestly endangered by the progress of Christianity. Early in the

* The term *Campus* belongs to the language of Sicily, in which it signified a hippodrome, or race-course; but amongst the Romans it was used to signify an open plain, covered with herbage, and set apart for the purpose of exercise or amusement. Eight of these plains are enumerated by P. Victor, as appertaining to the city of Rome; among which, the most celebrated was the Campus Martius, so called because it was consecrated to the god Mars. The most populous part of modern Rome stands here.

† Terminalia was a festival in honour of the god Terminus, who presided over boundaries. His statue was merely a stone or post, stuck in the ground to distinguish between properties. On the festival the two owners of adjacent property crowned the statue with garlands, and raised a rude altar, on which they offered some corn, honeycombs, and wine, and sacrificed a lamb, or a sucking-pig. The public festival in honour of this deity was celebrated at the sixth mile-stone, on the road towards Laurentum, doubtless because this was originally the extent of the Roman territory in that direction.

morning, when it was scarcely light, the Prefect of the city appeared at the door of the church in Nicomedia, attended by the officers of the city and of the court, with Generals and officers of the army; the doors were instantly thrown down, and an immediate entry was effected. The Pagans beheld with astonishment the appearance of the place; and after seeking in vain for an idol, or any visible object of worship, they burnt whatever sacred books were discovered, and the rest of the furniture of the building was plundered by the tumultuous soldiery. The two Emperors commanded from the palace a full view of the tumult and the spoliation, and marked the proceedings with evident anxiety; for the church stood on a height at no great distance, in a populous part of the city. It was a subject of consultation between them whether the edifice should not be set on fire. Galerius wished to enjoy the spectacle of its conflagration; but Diocletian fearing that the flames might extend to the splendid buildings which were contiguous, his opinion prevailed. The pioneers of the Prætorian guard were detached; and advancing in battle array, with the instruments of destruction in their hands, they surrounded the building, and in a few hours the lofty structure was razed to the ground. This was intended as a signal for further aggressions: the Christians made no resistance, but awaited in silent consternation the event.

On the following day another edict was declared, which was framed in terms of the sternest and most rigorous proscription, short of the punishment of death. It comprehended all ranks and orders under its sweeping and inevitable provisions. Throughout the empire the churches of the Christians were to be levelled with the ground, and the public existence of the religion annihilated. The sacred books were to be delivered, under pain of death, by their legitimate guardians, the Bishops and Presbyters, to the imperial officers, and publicly burnt. The philosophic party thus hoped to extirpate those pernicious writings with which they in vain contested the supremacy of the public mind. The property of the churches, whether endowed in land or furniture, was confiscated; all public assemblies for the purposes of worship prohibited; * the Christians of rank and distinction were degraded from all their offices, and declared incapable of filling any situation of trust or authority; those of the plebeian order were deprived of the right of Roman citizenship, which secured the sanctity of their persons from corporal chastisement or torture; slaves were declared incapable of claiming or obtaining their liberty; the whole race were placed without the pale of the law, disqualified from appealing to its protection in case of wrong, as of personal injury, of robbery, or adultery; while they were liable to civil actions, and bound to bear all the burdens of the state, and amenable to all its penalties. In many places an altar was put before the tribunal of justice, on which the plaintiff was obliged to sacrifice, before his cause could obtain a hearing.† How far the Christians of lower condition were to lose the

* Not only were the meetings of the Christians prohibited, but the houses in which they were held were liable to be seized for the use of the state. (Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. ix., cap. 10.)

† Milman, History of Christianity, vol. ii., p. 275.

enjoyment of their freedom, is certainly not sufficiently defined; but considerable latitude, says Neander, is left in the application of this edict to individual cases. It is certain, from the decree by which the Emperor Constantine annulled all the consequences of this persecution in the East, that, at times, free-born Christians were converted into slaves, and sentenced to those kinds of slave-labour which were at once the lowest and the most despised, and to which they would be the least adapted from their former habits of life.*

We are enabled to discover something of the spirit in which this edict was received throughout the empire among the Christians, by what took place at Nicomedia. A Christian of respectable condition allowed himself to be carried on, by a somewhat inconsiderate zeal, to violate that respect toward the government which the Gospel prescribes, and publicly to tear down the document, and then to rend it in pieces, exclaiming, in a sarcastic manner, "Behold, these are new victories over the Goths and Sarmatians which are posted up! The Emperor treats the Christians, his own subjects, no otherwise than if they were the conquered Goths and the Sarmatians!" This outrage on the imperial Majesty was expiated by the death of the offender, who avowed his glorious crime. Although less discreet Christians might secretly dignify the sufferings of the victim with the honours of martyrdom, they could only venture to approve the patience with which he endured the agony of being roasted alive by a slow fire.† There were also at this period many additional circumstances of a peculiar nature, which cast a somewhat disadvantageous light on Christianity, or, at least, might be made use of so to do. A fire having broken out in the imperial palace of Nicomedia, which spread almost to the chamber of the Emperor, it was natural enough that this circumstance should have been attributed to the revengeful spirit of the Christians; and the accusation might have still been true, without attaching any general disgrace to the whole Christian church; inasmuch as, among so numerous a body as the Christians, there might very likely be many who allowed themselves to be carried away by passion, which they would palliate under the semblance of religion, so

* Neander, History of the Christian Religion and Church, vol. i., p. 151. In order to understand the meaning of the edict as far as possible, we must compare the two imperfect and inaccurate statements given by Eusebius, (Hist. Eccles., lib. viii., cap. 2,) and the writer De Mortibus Persecutorum, as well as the translation of Rufinus. No positive interdict of assemblies for the worship of God is expressly given in any of these places; but the nature of the case shows that it was tacitly implied in the edict. But it is moreover clear, from credible and official documents relating to the first time of the persecution in proconsular Africa, that such an interdict was positively expressed in the decree. The words of Eusebius, which have caused much dispute, are difficult enough: *Τους εν οικετιαις ει ετι επιμενοιεν τῃ του Χριστιανισμου προθεσει, ἐλευθερίας στερισκεσθαι.* By the words *εν οικετιαις*, we cannot, according to the common use of language, understand anything but persons in the condition of servants, slaves. We must, therefore, if we wish to put any reasonable sense on the passage, seek for some other meaning for the word *ελευθερια*, than that which first offers itself. The words implying, "they shall be deprived of their freedom," may mean, "shall be put into chains and into prison." Compare above the edict of Valerian against the Cæsariani. But it is safe to follow Rufinus, who may have seen the original of the edict: "Si quis servorum permansisset, libertatem consequi non posset." If this be correct, the translation of Eusebius is very defective.

† Euseb., Hist. Eccles., lib. viii., cap. 8.

far as to forget of what manner of spirit they ought to be as the disciples of Christ.* The real origin of this fatal conflagration is unknown; and, notwithstanding the various causes to which it was ascribed by the fears, the malice, and the superstition of the different classes, we may probably, says Milman, refer the whole to accident. It may have arisen from the hasty or injudicious construction of a palace built but recently. The author of the work on the judgments which befell the persecutors, says, that Galerius himself caused the fire,† in order to be able to accuse the Christians of the crime; and Constantine, who was afterwards Emperor, and who was now at Nicomedia, says expressly that the palace was struck by lightning,‡ and discovers in that dispensation evident marks of the judgment of God. The truth is, as acknowledged by Eusebius, that we do not know the real cause: it was enough that the Christians were accused of a conspiracy against the Emperor, and that many of them were arrested without any distinction as to whom suspicion could attach or not. Most terrible tortures were used in order to obtain a confession, but to no purpose. Many were burnt, beheaded, and drowned. About fourteen days after a second fire broke out, which was speedily extinguished; and this tended to make it more probable that the fire was intentional. The Christians did not hesitate to throw the guilt of incendiarism upon Galerius, who had practised the part of a secret incendiary in order to criminate them, and to alarm Diocletian into his more violent measures.§ The impolicy of such an accusation as attributing the fire to the Christians, will at once appear, if we consider the chance which they actually had of destroying both their imperial enemies in the fire: this must have been very remote, and could only darken the subtle mind of Diocletian with the blackest superstition, and irritate Galerius to more unmeasured hostility; whilst it acquitted the Christians of all such conspiracies, even if their high principles, their sacred doctrines of peaceful submission, even under the direst persecution, did not place them above all suspicion. The only Christian who would have incurred the guilt, or provoked upon his innocent brethren the danger inseparable from such an act, would have been some desperate enthusiast, like the man who tore down the edict. The silence of Constantine may clear Galerius of the darker charge of contriving, by these base and indirect means, the destruction of a party against which he proceeded with undisguised hostility: Galerius, however, as if aware of the full effect with which such an event would work upon the mind of Diocletian, immediately left Nicomedia; declaring that he could not consider his person safe in that city.‖

The consequences which followed the conflagration were most disastrous to the whole Christian community. The officers of the household, the inmates of the palace, were exposed to the most cruel tortures, by the order of the Emperor. The females of the family were

* Neander, History of the Christian Religion and Church, vol. i., p. 157.
† Lactantius, De Mort. Persecut., cap. 14.
‡ Constant. Orat. ad Sanct., cap. 25.
§ Euseb., Hist. Eccles., lib. viii., cap. 6.
‖ Milman, History of Christianity, vol. ii., p. 277.

by no means exempt from the severest scrutiny in the judicial investigations which took place in the presence of Diocletian himself. It is remarkable that the servants of Galerius were subjected to no torture; but he took great pains to keep up the indignation of the old Emperor, who was now thoroughly in earnest, and raged most furiously against every individual bearing the Christian name. His wife Prisca,* and, what is still more extraordinary, her daughter Valeria, the wife of Galerius, who were at least suspected of a secret regard for Christianity, were compelled to offer sacrifice. The edict was still in force, which had been published several years before, ordering all official persons to attend the religious services of Heathenism; but it was now interpreted to mean, that they who did not comply should be put to death: an example was therefore set in torturing several individuals, who not only held places in the household, but had been great favourites with Diocletian. Among these, Peter, Dorotheus,† and Gorgonius stand conspicuous. The Emperor had shown a peculiar respect for them; some of them were even officers of his chamber; and he placed so great confidence in their fidelity in discharging trusts reposed in them, that nothing was done in the palace without their direction or permission; but no worldly advantage could prejudice any of them against the faith of the Redeemer; and the Almighty shortly vouchsafed unto them an opportunity of proving how empty and vain were the pleasures of time when compared with the honours of eternity. After the second conflagration had been subdued, Peter was seized and carried before Diocletian, who insisted upon him offering sacrifice. This he, of course, refused to do. He was immediately stripped naked, and scourged until his bones were laid bare, when vinegar and salt were applied to his wounds: he nevertheless maintained his integrity. He was then laid upon the iron-bed, or gridiron, and literally broiled over a slow fire. Nothing, however, could move him; and the executioners were conquered by his invincible courage and fortitude, which triumphed over all their attempts, and procured for him the glory and reward of martyrdom. Gorgonius and Dorotheus, after having felt the violent effects of the pagan fury, and endured a variety of torments, were strangled. Others of the Emperor's household died in a similar manner. "Diocletian," says Lactantius, "raged not only against his own domestics, but indiscriminately against all. Eunuchs, once the most powerful, and who had chief authority at court and with the Emperor, were slain. Presbyters, and other officers of the church, were seized, and without evidence, by witnesses or confessions, condemned, and, together with their families, were led to execution. In burning alive, no distinction of sex or age was regarded; and, because of their great multitude, they were not burnt one after another, but a herd of them were encircled with the same fire; and servants, having

* The name of the wife of Diocletian was unknown until the discovery of the MS. De Mort. Persecut. In the Acts of S. Susannah, she is styled *Serena*; in the Acts of St. George, *Alexandra*; and in the life of Pope Vigilius, she is styled, *Eleutheria*. This shows what credit is due to such writers! (Lord Hailes.)

† This Dorotheus is probably the same who had the superintendence of the manufactory of purple dye at Tyre; though some think that the latter survived to the reign of Julian.

millstones tied about their necks, were cast into the sea. Nor was the persecution less grievous on the rest of the people of God; for the Judges, dispersed through all the temples, sought to compel every one to sacrifice. The prisons were crowded; tortures hitherto unheard of were invented; and, lest justice should be inadvertently administered to a Christian, altars were placed in the courts of justice, hard by the tribunal, that every litigant might offer incense before his cause could be heard. Thus Judges were no otherwise approached than divinities. Mandates also had gone to Herculeus and Constantius, requiring their concurrence in the execution of the edicts; for, in matters even of such mighty importance, their opinion was never once asked. Herculeus, a man of no merciful temper, yielded ready obedience, and enforced the edict through the dominions of Italy. Constantius, on the other hand, lest he should have seemed to dissent from the injunctions of his superiors, permitted the demolition of churches, mere walls, and capable of being built up again; but he preserved entire that true temple of God, which is the human body;"* and Gaul, which was his favoured province, for a time was not defiled with Christian blood. The fierce temper of Herculeus only awaited the signal, and readily acceded to carry into effect the barbarous edicts of his colleagues.

When the persecutors attempted, by burning all the copies of the Bible, to annihilate Christianity, with its sources, for ever, they certainly, says Neander, made choice of means which were more efficacious than the extirpation of the living witnesses of the faith among mankind; for their example only excited a greater number of followers. On the contrary, if they could succeed in annihilating the inspired Scriptures, they would by that means have suppressed the very source from which true Christianity and the life of the church had constantly risen up afresh and unconquerable. Let them execute as many Preachers of the Gospel, Bishops and Clergy, as they would, nothing was done as long as this book, which could always form new teachers, remained to the Christians. Considered in itself, indeed, the transmission of Christianity was not necessarily dependent on the letters of holy writ. Inscribed, not in tables of stone, but in the living tablet of the heart, the divine doctrine, once established in the consciences of men, by its own divine power, might maintain its ground, and make further progress; but, as human nature is at present constituted, the testimony of history declares, that Christianity, separated from its source, the word of God, from which it may always be recalled to its purity, would soon be overwhelmed by the mixture of falsehood and corruption, and become so disguised as not to be recognised. This means, therefore, after the laws of human calculation, was well chosen; if only the wilfulness of man could have defied the almighty power of God, who wished to preserve the treasure of the holy word as the best possession of man, and could have brought its deep-laid schemes to effect. But how could it ever be imagined possible, according to the usual rules of human calculation, to find and to annihilate, by human power, all the copies of the

* Lactantius, De Mortib. Persecut., cap. 15.

Scriptures, which were not only deposited in the churches, but were also in existence in so many private houses? We here trace that blind policy which the empire of lies always makes use of, while it expects that nothing can escape its search, and that it can destroy, by fire and sword, what is protected by a higher power. The blind zeal for the support of the old religion went so far, in many cases, that the Heathen would willingly see many of the most glorious monuments of their own literature perish with the writings of the Christians, those at least in which a testimony was raised against the superstition of the popular religion, which were constantly used by the Christians in their controversy against Heathenism; and they would gladly have drawn up a whole "Index Librorum prohibitorum," and "expurgandorum." * One is immediately led to suppose, that where people of this description, or those who would cheerfully earn imperial favour by doing too much, rather than too little, were commonly to be found among the Governors and Magistrates of provinces, many acts of violence and cruelty must have been committed against the Christians, by the fulfilment of the first edict, in which the delivering up of the holy Scriptures and the discontinuance of congregations were commanded; and especially since by this edict Christians of all classes were subject to judicial investigations with the use of torture.

"But many Magistrates," continues Neander, "who were free from this fanaticism, and this spirit of flattery, which would sacrifice all higher objects to lower and baser, and who had more humane feelings, endeavoured, as far as possible, to soften the rigour of these

* Arnobius, who wrote exactly about this time, says, in his Disput. adv. Gentes, lib. iii., "Not a few abhorred the work of Cicero, 'De Natura Deorum,' and could not prevail on themselves to read a book which contradicted their ancient prejudices." Others said, in the greatest indignation, that a "Senatus-consultum" ought to be published, that those writings might be annihilated, by which Christianity was confirmed, and the authority of antiquity undermined: "Aboleantur ut hæc scripta, quibus Christiana religio comprobetur, ut vetustatis opprimatur auctoritas." Arnobius was a teacher of rhetoric at Sicca, a town of Numidia, in the reign of Diocletian. His great work, from which we have quoted above, was written at the time when he was a candidate for admission into the Christian church, and before he was enrolled among its members. Of this work, which consists of seven books, the first two are a defence of the Christian religion against the charges of the Gentiles, and a defence of the Deity and divine mission of Jesus Christ. The three next following are directed against the errors of Paganism; and the last two, a justification of the Christians for abandoning the pomp and luxury of the temples, sacrifices, and altars in use among the Pagans. He appears to have known nothing of the Old Testament; and of the New, only the history of Christ; unless we suppose that he purposely omits any allusion to the contents of the rest of the holy Scriptures, as being works unknown to those for whom he wrote. On the other hand, he shows great acquaintance with Greek and Roman writers, many of whom he cites by name; considerable knowledge of the Christian apologists,—Justin and Clemens Alexandrinus, for instance; and in the books devoted to the attack upon the doctrines of Paganism, he exhibits an extensive mythological knowledge, and quotes, for the purpose of giving them a philosophical explanation, many *myths* which are not now to be found in any other writer. The first edition of this work was published at Rome, (1542–3,) under the title of "Arnobii Disputationum adversus Gentes libri viii. Romæ. Fr. Priscianensis." The number of books here mentioned is made up by the addition of the Octavius of Minutius Felix as an eighth. A Commentary on the Psalms, and a Dispute between Serapion and Arnobius, De Deo Trino et Uno, which have been ascribed to him, are now decided to be the productions of the younger Arnobius, who was of Gaul, and a semi-Pelagian, who obtained considerable reputation for being mistaken as the veritable Arnobius the elder.

measures, and acted with as much lukewarmness as they could without openly violating the imperial edict. They either suffered themselves to be deceived by the Christians, or put the means into their hands of evading the edict, and fulfilling it only in appearance. Bishop Mensurius, of Carthage, used the precaution to bring all the copies of the Scriptures from the churches of Carthage to his own house, to preserve them there, while he left in the churches only the writings of heretics. When the inquisitors came, they took these writings, and went away satisfied. They were assuredly religious writings of the Christians; and in the edict nothing was said of what holy writings, and of what party among the Christians, it meant to speak. But some Senators of Carthage discovered the imposition to Annalinus, the Proconsul, and required him to institute a search in the house of the Bishop, where he would find all the writings. The Proconsul,* who was willing to be deceived, refused to comply with this request. When Secundus, another Numidian Bishop, refused to deliver up the holy writings, the inquisitors asked him why he could not deliver up some useless extracts, or at least give them something, anything he pleased.† With the same intention, probably, must the Legate of the Proconsul have asked the Numidian Bishop Felix, as he did more than once, 'Why, then, do you not give up your *superfluous* writings?' ‡ So, also, in the case of Felix, the African Bishop, when the Præfectus Prætorio asked him, 'Why dost thou not give up the holy writings? or perhaps thou hast none?' it is evident enough that he meant to put the latter assertion into his mouth.§

"In the conduct of the Christians at this critical time we find the opposite results which, under such circumstances, the different inclinations and imperfections of human nature are apt to bring about: some, in the dread of martyrdom and death, gave up their copies of the Bible, which were then burnt in the public market-place,—these men were excommunicated, under the name of *traditores*;‖

* August., Opera, tom. ix., Brevical. Collat. cum Donat. Dies, iii., cap. 13. Edit. 8vo. Paris, 1837.

† "Aliqua ἐκβολα aut quodcunque."

‡ "Quare scripturas non tradis supervacuas?" is, perhaps, intentionally ambiguous; so that the words might be understood to mean, that *the Christian writings in general* were something useless.

§ Ruinart, Acta Martyrum Sincera, Acta Felicis, p. 356.

‖ A name applied to those who delivered up their Bibles, and the sacred utensils of the church, to the Heathen to be burnt in the time of the Diocletian persecution. The first Council of Arles, held immediately after the persecution, (Labbe, Concilia Sacrosancta, tom. i., p. 1428,) makes it deposition from his order for any Clergyman who could be convicted by the public Acts of this crime, either of betraying the Scriptures, or any of the holy vessels, or the names of his brethren, to the persecutors. The Donatists frequently, but falsely, objected this crime to Cæcilian, Bishop of Carthage, and those that ordained him, that they were traditors; upon which Augustine tells them, that if they could evidently make good the charge, the Catholics would not scruple to anathematize them after death. (August. Opera, tom. ii., Epist. ad Bonifac. Bened. edit., p. 967. Paris, 1837.) But the truth of the matter was, these very objectors were traditors themselves, though they had the impudence to absolve one another, while they threw the charge upon innocent men, as Optatus (Opera, De Schismate Donatistarum, lib. i., folio, Paris, 1676) and Augustine (Opera, tom. ix., Contra Crescon. Donat., lib. iii., cap. 27, Bened. edit., p. 696, Paris, 1837) show out of the acts of their own Council of Cirta, where they acted this comedy which stood as a witness against them. (Bingham, Antiquities of the Christian Church, vol. vi., book xvi., chap. vi., § 26. Straker's edition.)

others, (of which we find examples more particularly in northern Africa, where an enthusiastic disposition was natural to the people,) without any necessity, but in a blind zeal, into the composition of which something of earthly warmth entered, gave themselves up to death, by declaring that they were Christians, that they had holy writings in their possession, but that nothing should induce them to give them up; or else they rejected with scorn the means of evasion proffered by Governors of humane feelings: in this latter case, we ought to give high honour to a tender conscientiousness, which did not act thus out of a delusive enthusiasm to become martyrs, but because they held it unchristian to deceive in this manner, or because it appeared to them a tacit denial of the faith, if they delivered up these writings to the Heathen, and allowed them to think that these were the holy Scriptures of the Christians. Others believed it to be their duty to remain true to their faith with the simplicity of doves, and with hallowed prudence to accommodate themselves to the times. They used every precaution which was not incompatible with the profession of Christianity, to save from danger their own lives, and at the same time the copies of the Scriptures; and, in order to divert the jealousy of the Heathen, they endeavoured to temper the violent zeal of their brethren. It was likely enough that these men should be condemned by the other party, as those with whom the fear of man and human considerations had too much weight, and as cowardly traitors to the faith,—a feeling which proved, in after-days, the source of many convulsive struggles in the North African church. The prudence, however, of this party in the Christian community, at least, had this advantage, that it withdrew from the fanatical fury of the people many copies of the Bible which otherwise would have been a prey to the flames." *

While the Emperors were declaring war against the Christian church, other adversaries were attacking them with the pen. Two works were published about this time at Nicomedia, which were intended to bring Christianity into contempt and ridicule. One was written by a philosopher, who pretended great zeal for Paganism, and a wish to save the Christians from suffering; but he was careful to introduce many compliments to the Emperors, for defending the old religion.† Lactantius, who was living in Nicomedia at the time, speaks of this man as extremely dissolute in his life, and of his book as being very defective in argument.‡ The other work was composed in two books, and called "Philalethes." The author was Hierocles,§ who

* Neander, History of the Christian Religion and Church, vol. i., p. 152, *et seq.*

† Lactantii Divinarum Institutionum lib. v., De Justitia, cap. ii.

‡ Lactantius does not mention his name; it is written in the dust: he was not unlike some Preachers of morality in all ages,—a defender of virtue, and a practitioner of vice; a flatterer of the court, very rich and very corrupt; one who condemned his own practice by his moral writings; and who dealt largely in the praises of the Emperors on account of their great piety in supporting the religion of the gods. Yet all men condemned his meanness in choosing that time particularly to write against Christians; nor did he obtain the favour at court which he expected. (Milner.)

§ A notorious persecutor of the Christians in the beginning of the fourth century: he was at first President of Bithynia, and afterwards Governor of Alexandria. Lactantius relates, that at the time he was teaching rhetoric in Bithynia, and the Christian church

held some judicial station in the city: he was a man of some talent, but a virulent enemy of the Gospel, and exercised great influence in promoting this persecution. He appears to have held some military command in Egypt; but wherever he was employed, he distinguished himself for cruelty against the Christians. His work was addressed to them in the form of an expostulation; but it proved to be a bitter attack upon the founders of their religion, as well as upon the Scriptures, with which he showed such an intimate acquaintance, that he might almost have been suspected of having once been a believer. It was utterly unbecoming and discourteous to choose, for his attack on Christianity, the season when persecution against the Christians was in full operation; a time which a man of tender feelings, as he professed himself to be, would have been the last to select. In his work, Hierocles brings forward much which had been said by Celsus and Porphyry, and allowed himself to indulge in the most shameless falsehoods about the history of Christ. In order to deprive Christians of their argument from the miracles of Christ, he carries on a comparison between him and Apollonius of Tyana, allowing full credit to all the fables which the rhetorical Philostratus chose to narrate from unauthenticated sources, and from his own fancy; as, for example, that he understood the language of animals: in a word, he everywhere recognises the Apostles as uneducated and lying impostors. However, at this time Lactantius,* a native of Africa, was teaching

under persecution, Hierocles was one of the Judges, and had been the chief promoter of the persecution which the Christians suffered under Diocletian. He composed two small books; not, indeed, professedly against the Christians, lest he should seem to inveigh against them as an enemy; but insidiously addressed to them, that he might be thought to advise them kindly as a friend. They were entitled, Λογοι φιλαληθεις προς Χριστιανους, in which he insisted upon some points in Scripture which seemed to him to contradict one another. He attempted also to compare the feigned miracles of Apollonius Tyanæus with those of Jesus Christ, and pretended to prove that Apollonius had performed even greater wonders. Eusebius undertook, in his book against Hierocles, to confute the latter part of this work; but, as Dr. Cave says, "he has done it very indifferently, his confutation being little more than a bare running over Philostratus's Life of Apollonius."

* Lactantius, whose name is now generally written Lucius Cælius, or Cæcilius, Firmianus Lactantius, was the most eloquent of the Latin fathers, and flourished at the close of the third and in the early part of the fourth century. Some have conjectured that he was a native of Firmum, now Firmo, in Italy, and that from thence he was called Firmianus; but it is more generally believed that he was an African. He was educated under Arnobius, who taught rhetoric at Sicca in Africa. While he studied there he wrote a book, entitled, Symposium, or The Banquet; by which he acquired so great a reputation, that when Diocletian entertained the design of rendering Nicomedia a rival to Rome, he was sent for by him to teach rhetoric in that city. Lardner thinks that he was educated in the Christian religion. That he was a Christian when Diocletian's persecution commenced at Nicomedia, is unquestionable. How he passed through that long and dreadful affliction, we are not informed. He was afterwards invited by Constantine into Gaul, and appointed Latin preceptor to his son Crispus. The date of his death is not known. Dupin says, that he is the most eloquent of all the ecclesiastical authors who wrote in Latin; and he deserves the name of the Christian Cicero, not only for the clearness and purity of his language, but also for the turn of his phrase, and his manner of writing. His principal work is entitled, Divine Institutions, in seven books, and contains a confutation of the writings of two Heathens of note, who had published pieces against the Christian religion at the commencement of the persecution under Diocletian. Critics have widely differed in their judgments concerning the time of writing and publishing them; but the weight of evidence appears to preponderate in favour of the opinion of Cave and Lardner, who consider them to have been composed about the year 306. Basnage and Dupin place them about A.D. 320. Of the preceding

rhetoric at Nicomedia, which gave him an opportunity of reading these works, as well as of witnessing the sufferings of the Christians; and although the place afforded him but few pupils who cultivated the Latin language, he took to writing, and some of his voluminous works have come down to us. The "Divine Institutions," in seven books, though not published till after this period, were undertaken as an answer to the two works mentioned above; and they contain much valuable information, as well as decisive proof of the writer being a sincere believer in the Gospel; but we must not forget that Lactantius was a layman, and a rhetorician, who was but imperfectly acquainted with some of the leading points of Christianity. While the religion of Christ was thus assailed by persecution or argument, if it may be so called, defenders of the faith were always ready to cope with it.

The persecution now became general. In almost every part of the world, Christianity found itself assailed by the full force of the civil power, constantly goaded on by the united influence of the pagan priesthood and the philosophic party. "The furious rage of the malignant Emperors," says Foxe, "being let loose against the saints of Christ, proceeded more and more, making havoc of God's people throughout all quarters of the world. Diocletian, who had purposed with himself to subvert the whole Christian religion, executed his tyranny in the East, and Herculeus in the West. But the wily Diocletian began with great subtlety; for he put the matter first in practice in the camp, where his Lieutenant * put the Christian soldiers to this choice,—whether they would obey the Emperor's commandment in that manner of sacrifice he enjoined, and so both keep their offices and lead their bands, or else to cast away from them their armour and weapons. Whereunto the Christian men courageously answered, that they were not only ready to throw aside their armour and weapons, but also to suffer death, if it should with tyranny be enforced upon them, rather than they would obey the wicked decrees and commandments

work there is also an abridgment, entitled, Institutionum Epitome, inscribed by Lactantius to his brother Pentadius. This was imperfect at the beginning, in Jerome's copy, and was so in those which reached modern times; till a perfect, or nearly perfect, copy was found in the library of the King of Sardinia, at Turin, by Dr. Christopher Matthew Pfaff, and published by him at Paris in 1712. In his treatise, De Irâ Dei, which is particularly commended by Jerome, Lactantius endeavours to prove, that God is capable of anger as well as of mercy and compassion; and in his treatise, De Opificio Dei, he establishes the doctrine of God's providence, by demonstrating the excellence of his principal work, which is man, giving an elegant description of the parts of the human body, and the properties or faculties of the soul. Respecting the well-known book, De Mortibus Persecutorum, the learned world has been divided in opinion. It is a work which none of the ancients, after the time of Jerome, have noticed; and it was first published by Stephen Baluze, in the second volume of his Miscellanea, in 1679. The first edition of the works of Lactantius was published at Rome in 1468, fol., by Conrad Lewenheim; and the last, of any importance, which is the most correct, was edited at Paris, in 1748, 2 vols., 4to., by the Abbé Lenglet. There is also an edition by Heumann, Göttingen, 1736. Lactantius also wrote an Itinerary from Africa to Nicomedia, a work entitled Grammaticus, two books to Asclepiades, and eight books of Epistles, all of which are lost.

* Στρατοπεδαρχης. Eusebius says, in his Chronicon, that this man's name was Veturius. Foxe renders the word, "Marshal of the field." The Chief Magistrates in the Emperor's provinces exercised both the civil and military functions, and bore military titles.

of the Emperor. There might a man have seen very many who were desirous to lead a simple and poor life, and who regarded no estimation and honour in comparison of true piety and godliness. And this was no more but a subtle and wily flattery in the beginning, to offer them liberty, whether they would willingly abjure their profession or not; as also this was another, that in the beginning of the persecution there were but a few tormented with punishment; but afterward, by degrees, the enemy began more manifestly to break out into open persecution.* After the second edict, commanding that all the governors of churches should be committed to prison, the sight of what was then done no expressions are sufficient to describe, when infinite multitudes were everywhere committed to custody; and the prisons, which had formerly been provided for murderers and robbers of the dead, were then filled with Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, Readers and Exorcists, insomuch that there was now no place left therein for those who had been condemned for their crimes. Again, when another edict offered the choice to the imprisoned, of liberty on sacrificing, or a thousand tortures on refusal, it can hardly be expressed with words what number of martyrs and what blood was shed throughout all cities and regions for the name of Christ." †

The tide of persecution had fully set in; edict followed edict in rapid succession, and unheard-of tortures were invented and applied: nevertheless, many endeavours have been made to depreciate the accounts which have been recorded of this general and simultaneous attack upon the church. The historian Milner says, "If I think it needless to relate distinctly all the sufferings of the Christians under it, I must not be supposed to countenance such attempts. The agreement of Lactantius and Eusebius, both contemporary authors of credit, is apparent. That such edicts were published, that much pains were used to enforce them, that a real attempt was made to extinguish the Gospel, more systematical, and conducted with more industry and refinement, than formerly, are certain. Even if we had no particular Martyrologies extant, we might be assured, from circumstances, that much blood must have been spilt, and much misery endured, not only in a regular and legal way, but also by tumultuary violence, and by the malice of men combined against a set of persons deprived universally of the protection of the laws. There wanted not some instances of humanity and generosity in Pagans towards their Christian friends and relations; but whoever knows what the passions

* Diocletian "did not all at once, nor in a mass, wage an open war against us; but as yet only made trial of those that were in the armies. For in this way he supposed that the rest could easily be taken, if he could first succeed in subduing these. Then one could see great numbers of the military most cheerfully embracing a private life, so as not to renounce their reverence for the supreme Creator of the universe. For when the General, whoever he was, first undertook the persecution against the soldiers, he began by a review and lustration of those that were enrolled in the army; and gave them their choice, either to enjoy the honour conferred upon them if they obeyed, or, on the contrary, to be deprived of it if they disobeyed. Very many who were soldiers in the kingdom of Christ, without hesitation, preferred the confession of his name to that apparent glory and comfort which they enjoyed; and of these a few here and there exchanged their honours, not only for degradation, but even for death, for their perseverance in religion." (Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. viii., cap. 4.)

† Foxe, Acts and Monuments, vol. i., p. 226. Seeley's edition.

of men are capable of, when set afloat, and suffered to act without check or control, will not doubt that the sufferings of Christians at this period must have been far greater than can be related by any historian. Thus did God at once punish the sins of Christians, revive his work in their hearts by sanctified afflictions, evidence the extreme depravity of mankind, and, above all, illustrate his own power and wisdom in baffling the rage of Satan,* and in defending and delivering his church when everything seemed combined for its destruction. Should any be inclined to pay more regard to the testimonies of Heathens, than of Christians, let them hear Libanius, the friend of Julian the Apostate, who thus speaks, in his funeral oration, of that Emperor: 'They who adhered to a corrupt religion' (he means the Christian) 'were in great terrors, and expected that their eyes would be plucked out, that their heads would be cut off, and that rivers of their blood would flow from the multitude of slaughters. They apprehended their new master would invent new kinds of torments, in comparison of which mutilation, sword, fire, drowning, being buried alive, would appear but slight pains. For the preceding Emperors had employed against them all these kinds of punishments.' He goes on to commend Julian for using milder methods. Two pillars in Spain were also monuments of the systematic cruelty of this persecution, on one of which was this inscription: 'Diocletian, Jovian, Maximian Herculeus, Cæsares Augusti, for having extended the Roman empire in the East and West, and for having extinguished the name of Christians, who brought the republic to ruin.' On the other this: 'Diocletian, &c., for having adopted Galerius in the East; for having everywhere abolished the superstition of Christ; for having extended the worship of the gods.' And to name only one more evidence, the cruelty must have been egregious, which could have induced the persecutors to strike the medal of Diocletian, which still remains, with this inscription: 'The name of Christians being extinguished.'" †

A political storm, which took place about this time, appears to have farther exasperated Diocletian, and to have spurred him onwards to exercise greater cruelties. Two persons, in different places, assumed the imperial title; one in Armenia, who has not had his name preserved; the other was Eugenius, who commanded some regiments at Seleucia; and, being invested with the purple by the soldiers, he took possession of the neighbouring city of Antioch. The inhabitants soon put him and his supporters to death, and his authority only lasted a few days; but Diocletian chose to be very angry with the

* "Let not the reader startle, because I ascribe the persecutions of the church to satanic influence. The following scriptures, carefully compared together, seem abundantly to warrant such a sentiment: John viii. 38—44; 1 Thess. ii. 18; 1 Peter v. 8, 9; 1 John iii. 8—13; the Revelation throughout. To these the evangelical reader may easily add many more. Moreover, as the description of the influences of the Holy Spirit form an essential part of this History, it seems to fall in with my plan, to bring into view, from time to time, the counterpart of the said influences, which is undoubtedly the agency of Satan." (Milner.)

† "Nomine Christianorum deleto." See Milner, History of the Church, vol. ii., p. 7, 8vo. edit. Cambridge, 1795.

two cities of Antioch and Seleucia; and it was after this disturbance that he issued a still more definite edict against the Christians. It was ordered that the heads of the churches in every place should first be put into prison, and then that every means should be used to compel them to sacrifice to the heathen deities.* At the same time, letters were despatched to Herculeus and Constantius, calling upon them to take similar measures in the countries under their command.† The former was a person of no merciful temper, and therefore yielded prompt obedience, and enforced the command cheerfully throughout Italy: it was different with Constantius; but lest he should appear to dissent from the injunctions of his superiors, he permitted the demolition of the Christian edifices, but spared the lives of the faithful. The edict was executed at Nicomedia as soon as it was proclaimed, and many fell victims to its sanguinary character. Eusebius speaks of the prisons being so full of these unhappy inmates, that there was no room for others.‡ The same historian relates, that "some were slain with the axe, as in Arabia; some had their limbs fractured, as in Cappadocia; and some, suspended by the feet, and a little raised from the ground, with their heads downwards, were suffocated with the ascending smoke of a gentle fire kindled below, as was done to those in Mesopotamia; some were mutilated by having their noses, ears, and hands cut off, and the rest of their limbs, and portions of their body, cut to pieces, as was the case at Alexandria. Why should we revive the recollection of those at Antioch, who were roasted on grates of fire, not to kill immediately, but torture them with a lingering punishment?" § Two ladies in Antioch are recorded as "distinguished for piety, and truly sisters (says Eusebius) in all respects; illustrious in family, wealth, youth, and beauty; but not less so for their serious minds, their pious deportment, and their admirable zeal; and, as if the earth could not bear such excellence, they were ordered by these worshippers of demons to be thrown into the sea. Others, at Pontus, endured torments that are too horrible to relate. Some had their fingers pierced with sharp reeds thrust under the nails. Others had masses of molten lead, bubbling and boiling with heat, poured down their backs; and others endured insufferable torments on the most tender and delicate parts of the human frame, which their Judges, with a view to display their refinement in cruelty, devised as proof of their wisdom, and worthy of universal approbation. Thus constantly inventing new tortures, they vied with one another, as if there were prizes proposed in the contest, who should invent the most exquisite cruelties. As to the last of these calamities, when the Judges now had despaired of inventing anything more effectual, and were weary of slaughter, and had surfeited themselves with shedding blood, they then directed their energies to what they considered kindness and humanity; so that they seemed disposed to exercise no farther cruelty against us. For, said

* Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. viii., cap. 2.
† Lactant., De Mort. Persecut., cap. xv.
‡ Burton, Lect. on Eccles. Hist., lect. xxix.
§ Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. viii., cap. 12.

they, the cities should not be polluted with blood any more, and the government of the Sovereigns, which was so kind and merciful toward all, should not be defamed for excessive cruelty: it was more proper that the benefits afforded by their humane and imperial Majesties should be extended to all, and that we should no longer be punished with death. For we were liberated from this punishment by the great clemency of the Emperors. After this, therefore, they were ordered only to tear out our eyes, or to deprive us of one of our legs. Such was their kindness, and such the lightest kind of punishment against us; so that, in consequence of this humanity of theirs, it was impossible to tell the great and incalculable number of those that had their right eye dug out with the sword first, and, after that, seared with a red-hot iron; those, too, whose left foot was maimed with a searing-iron; after them, those who in different provinces were condemned to the copper-mines, not so much for the service as for the contumely and misery they should endure. Many, also, endured conflicts of other kinds, which it would be impossible to detail: their noble fortitude surpasses all power of description. In this the magnanimous confessors of Christ, who shone conspicuous throughout the whole world, everywhere struck the beholders with astonishment, and presented the obvious proofs of our Saviour's divine interposition in their own persons. To mention each by name would be at least a long and tedious work, not to say impossible." *

We shall now, as we have before done, consider some individual traits of Christian faith and courage as they have been told in credible accounts. At the commencement of the persecution we meet with the following relation of Gordius, a Centurion in the army. In the time of extreme trial, he refused any longer to discharge his military duties, and chose a voluntary exile, leading a religious and solitary life in the desert. But on the day on which was solemnized the festival of Mars in the city of Cæsarea, and when much people was assembled in the theatre to witness the games, he left his place of retreat, and entered the chief part of the Circus, and, with a loud voice, repeated the words of the Apostle, "Behold, I am found of them which sought me not; and to those which asked not for me, have I openly appeared." By these words he gave the populace to understand, that he had come of his own accord to surrender up himself. At this interruption the multitude, little regarding the sights, looked around to see who it was that had uttered such an address. As soon as it was recognised to be Gordius, the crier commanded silence, and the exile was conveyed into the presence of the officer. When he was asked the question, who he was, and from whence he came, he told the truth: "I am come," said he, "to publish that I set nothing by your decrees against the Christian religion, but that I profess Jesus Christ to be my hope and my salvation; and when I understood how ye surpassed other men in cruelty, I took this as a fit time to accomplish my desire." With these words the officer was greatly moved, and expended all his displeasure upon the victim, commanding the executioners to be brought forth, with scourges,

* Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. viii., cap. 12.

wheel, gibbet, and whatever torments they could devise. The martyr answered, that it would be to him a hinderance and a damage if he could not suffer and endure various pains and punishments for the cause of Christ. The man in office, being offended at his boldness, directed all the tortures which they had, to be applied to him: but he, lifting up his eyes to heaven, sang, "The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me;" and also, "I will fear no evil, for thou art with me." After this he again provoked the extremity of his tormentors, and reproached them if they showed him any favour at all. When the officer saw that he gained but little, he endeavoured, by enticing words and gentleness, to turn the stout and valiant mind of Gordius. He promised large offers of temporal advantage if he would but deny Christ: all was in vain, inasmuch as he derided the folly of the Magistrate, who imagined that he could confer any earthly good, worthy of being compared with a place in heaven. With these words the official was mortified, and prepared to pronounce the condemnation of the martyr, whom he ultimately caused to be taken out of the city, and burnt. Many ran to see him executed; others to testify respect for him, and to urge him to save himself; to whom Gordius replied, "Weep not, I pray you, for me, but rather for the enemies of God, who always make war against the Christians: weep, I say, for them who prepare for us a fire, and purchase for themselves hell-fire in the day of vengeance. Cease, therefore, to molest and disquiet me. I am ready for the name of Christ to endure a thousand deaths, if need were." Some persuaded him to deny Christ with his mouth, and to preserve his conscience clear to himself. He said, "My tongue, which by the goodness of God I have, cannot be brought to deny the Author and Giver of the same; for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Shortly after he underwent his sentence.*

Similar to the above we have the account of Mennas the Egyptian, who, in the persecution of Diocletian, was led to flee to the desert; but returning to the city of Cotyæum, in the open Circus, while the people were occupied with the spectacles and pastimes, he, with a loud voice, proclaimed himself a Christian. Being brought before Pyrrhus, the President, he was interrogated respecting his faith; to whom he replied, "Convenient it is that I should confess God, in whom is light and no darkness." After this the sufferer was most painfully tortured: in all, however, he manifested a constant heart and invincible faith, confessing, "There is nothing in my mind that can be compared to the kingdom of heaven; neither is all the world, if it were weighed in the balance, able to be estimated with one soul. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation or distress? I have thus learned of my Lord and King, not to fear them which kill the body, and have no power to kill the soul; but to fear Him rather who hath power to destroy both body and soul in hell-fire." On being sentenced to lose his head, and being led to the

* Basilii Magni Opera, tom. i., Homilia xix. In Gordium Martyrem Cæsariensem, p. 443, *et seq.* Fol. Paris, 1638.

place of execution, he exclaimed, "I give thee thanks, O Lord God, who hast so accepted me as to be found a partaker of thy precious death, and hast not given me to be devoured by mine enemies, but hast enabled me to remain constant in thy pure faith to my latter end;" and after fighting valiantly, he lost his head, but won his soul.* In this association of martyrs there was also Cyrus, a Physician of Alexandria, who during the persecution fled into Egypt, and led a solitary life in Arabia: he was afterwards accompanied by one of the name of John, who was born in the city of Edessa, and had relinquished the life of a soldier, which he had aforetime followed. During the time that the persecution raged in the city of Canope in Egypt, a Christian woman called Athanasia, and her three daughters, Theoctista, Theodota, and Eudoxia, with whom Cyrus was acquainted, were cast into prison for the confession of the faith. Attended by his companion John, he visited them in order to encourage and comfort them. Syrianus at that time was the chief Captain and Lieutenant of Egypt, whose licentiousness and cruelty Athanasius has recorded. These benevolent individuals (Cyrus and John) were accused by certain adversaries of having persuaded Athanasia and her daughters to continue steadfast in their opposition to the edicts of the Emperors; and not being induced by any means to offer the sacrifice required, they were put to death by the sword. The Christian matron, also, with her family, subsequently suffered.

Basil of Cæsarea, in one of his Homilies, makes mention of not less than forty martyrs, who were called to pass through much tribulation and death for the kingdom of heaven's sake. The account is, in fact, as follows:—There came into a certain place the officer of the Emperors, bearing the atrocious edict which had been promulgated against the Christians, stating that whosoever were discovered acknowledging Christ should, after various torments, be put to death. Numerous individuals were arrested, and the sword, the gibbet, and the wheel were brought forth, at which the hearts of many trembled. Some did fly for fear, and many stood in doubt, not knowing what course to take. Numbers were so terrified at the sight of these instruments of torture, that they denied the faith; and others, who began the conflict, and for a time were "steadfast" and "unmovable," finally made "shipwreck of their faith, and of a good conscience." All, however, did not abandon their profession: there were forty who proved themselves undaunted followers of Christ, that, when the officer exhibited the cruel edict, freely and without fear acknowledged themselves Christians, and declared their names. The officer, or Marshal, as some have termed him, was amazed, and endeavoured, by enticing words, to draw them from their steadfastness: he alluded to their youth, and that they ought not to prefer a cruel and untimely death to an easy and pleasant life, and even promised them wealth and honourable offices in the Emperor's name.

* Another Mennas, a martyr in Libya, under Maximian, is named in the Eastern and Western Martyrologies. Procopius mentions a church built at Constantinople by Justinian in honour of him. This Baronius understands of the Libyans. (Alban Butler.)

These confessors did not esteem these things, and assured the Marshal, that they did not desire life, dignity, nor money, but only the kingdom of Christ; for they were ready, for the faith and love which they had to and in God, to endure the affliction of the wheel, the cross, and the fire. The irritated Marshal forthwith devised a novel mode of punishment. Knowing that before the walls of the city was a certain large pond, which lay exposed to the northern blast, and as it was the time of winter, he commanded them to be put into it, and to remain there during the night. They received this punishment with cheerfulness, comforting one another by saying, "We put off not our clothes, but we put off the old man, corrupt with the deceit of concupiscence: we give thee thanks, O Lord, that with this our apparel we may also put off, by thy grace, the sinful man; for by means of the serpent we once put him on, and through Jesus Christ we now put him off." When they had said this, they were led naked into the water, where they experienced such vehement cold as to render their limbs stiffened and motionless. As soon as the day began to dawn, they were conducted to a large fire, where they were consumed. It seems that one of the company, more vigorous than the rest, appeared to endure the severity of the cold with less suffering; and the executioners, taking pity upon him, said unto his mother, who was a spectator, that they would save his life; but she with her own hands took up her son, and brought him to the pile of wood where the residue of his companions were lying, literally crooked on account of the cold, and admonished him to complete the journey which he had taken in hand.* The same writer, in another Homily, relates the case of one Barlaam, a distinguished martyr, who endured all the torments of his executioners to the point of death; which when the myrmidons of the Marshal saw, they laid him upon the altar where their unholy sacrifices were offered, and placed fire and frankincense into his right hand, imagining that the influence of the fire would have induced him to scatter fragments of the incense upon the altar, and thus he might be said to have sacrificed. In this, however, they were disappointed; for the flame raged around his hand without igniting the gum, and the martyr recited out of the Psalms the words, "Blessed be the Lord, my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight."

By no means dissimilar to the account of Barlaam, we have the

* Basilii Magni Opera, tom. i., Homilia xx. In Quadraginta Martyrum, p. 452. Fol. Paris, 1638. A similar account of forty martyrs, who were married men, is recorded by Nicephorus (Eccles. Hist., lib. vii., cap. 44) and Sozomen, (lib. ix., cap. 2,) who were killed likewise in a lake or pond at Sebaste, a town of Armenia. In all probability it is the same as that mentioned by Basil. Sozomen, to whom reference is made, was a native of Palestine, and in great repute as an advocate at Constantinople about the year 440, and is known by a history of the Christian church from its first establishment to his own times. Of this work the latter part only has reached posterity, containing an account of the transactions from the year 324 downwards. It is visibly copied from the similar history of Socrates, and is equally remarkable for the marvellous legends which it details, and the florid style in which they are narrated. He is supposed to have died about the middle of the fifth century. His history was translated and published by Valesius, with Eusebius, and other ecclesiastical historians; and separately, with additional notes by Reading. London, 1720. 3 vols. folio.

narrative of the martyrdom of Agricola and Vitalis, which Ambrose * mentions in his exhortation to certain virgins, and who suffered during this persecution at Bologna. Vitalis was a servant of Agricola, and, with his master, resolved to surrender his life in the company of other martyrs for the sake of Christ. The former had the precedence, and first fell into the hands of his persecutors, who endeavoured by every means of persuasion to induce him to deny his Lord: finding these measures abortive, they employed torture so unmercifully, that no whole skin remained on his person, and in the midst of painful agony he gave up his life. After his death the executioners addressed themselves towards Agricola, whose virtuous character and gentle demeanour were so well known and approved, that his sufferings were longer deferred; but he, not approving of this delay, and provoking his adversaries to quicker speed, was fastened to a cross, and in this manner consummated his martyrdom. Vitus, Modestus, and Crescentius suffered about this time. The first was a native of Sicily, and descended from one of the respectable families of the island. Providence ordained that in early life he should be placed in the hands of a Christian nurse, who instructed him in the principles of religion, and trained him up in the way in which he should go. Her endeavours were crowned with success, inasmuch as Vitus increased in piety as he advanced in years, and was so well-grounded in Christian truth and practice, that nothing could prevail with him to renounce or dishonour his profession. His constancy exposed him to numerous trials; but he was superior to them all. Hylas, his father, attempted to draw him from his steadfastness, and so far forgot the ties of nature as to deliver him up into the hands of a heathen Magistrate: the persecution of Diocletian had already commenced in most parts of the empire, and Valerian, the Governor of Sicily, was by no means backward in carrying the edicts of the Emperor into execution. Vitus was only twelve years old when he was brought before the Magistrate, who was requested by his father to correct him, and, if possible, to frighten him with the fear of death if he persevered in the faith of Christ. Valerian ordered him to be scourged, and returned to his father; thinking that after having felt the smart of the rod, it would not be difficult to bring him to any terms. But in this he was greatly mistaken: Hylas, finding his son invincible, gave loose to wild transports of zeal for the heathen deities, whom he thought dishonoured by the conduct of his son, and resolved to sacrifice him in order to deter the rest of his family from following his example. Vitus had notice of his father's intention, and thought it best to avoid the impending blow so long as he could with safety. With this view he transported himself, with Modestus and Crescentius, to the Continent, and abode in the province of Lucania, a part of the kingdom of Naples; to which place they were pursued, and, by the order of Valerian, or some other persecutor, they were all put to death.

Herculeus was a stranger to humanity; and his presence was at all times fatal to the Christians: the cruelty of his temper had

* Ambrosii Opera, tom. v., Epistol., lib. vii., p. 318. Fol. Paris, 1661.

risen to a degree of unparalleled fury against the church through his blind and superstitious zeal for the pagan deities: when he came to Marseilles, he immediately commenced proceedings against the faithful, by commanding the various Prefects and other officers to employ their utmost endeavours and ingenuity to arrest, imprison, torture, and slay all who bore the name of Christ. Victor was the most considerable person among the many who suffered for the truth during the residence of Herculeus at Marseilles: he was descended from an ancient and honourable family, and held an important office in the Roman army. His worldly employment, however, did not lead him to forget the obligations of religion, or the duties which he owed the members of the Christian church. It was his constant practice to spend a considerable portion of the night in visiting the faithful, in order to strengthen and confirm them in the truth, and to comfort and encourage them in this dark and stormy period of persecution and trial. It was in this labour of love that he was engaged, when the orders of the Emperor were issued to seize him. He was conducted before two Prefects of the city, who endeavoured to persuade him to alter his present line of proceeding; observing, that it was not worth his while to forfeit his interest with his Prince, and expose himself to his anger, for the sake of a dead man who was called Christ, the Author and Giver of life. Victor boldly replied, that he preferred the service of that *dead man*, who was in reality the Son of God, and was risen from the grave, to all the advantages he could possibly reap from the favour of the Emperor; that he was a soldier of Christ, and should be careful that the post which he held under an earthly potentate should not interfere with his duty to the King of kings; and as for the gods, the worship of which they so strongly recommended, he held them as no better than evil spirits. Those who were present at this examination, hearing him speak so contemptuously of what they conceived to be most sacred, loaded him with invectives and reproach; but as he was a man of rank and fortune, the Prefects resolved to send him in person before the Emperor.

As soon as he came before Herculeus, he was required, under pain of the severest punishment, to offer the accustomed sacrifice; but these menaces, so far from shaking the firmness of his resolution, only strengthened it. In his defence, he fearlessly established the divinity of the Saviour, and by irrefragable arguments showed the fallacy of all idol-worship. The Prince, being infuriated, ordered him to be bound and dragged through the streets, an example to all those who dared to despise the gods of the empire. The populace ran from all parts to see and assist at this barbarous spectacle, and cruelly aided the authorities by blows and insults upon the victim. Covered with wounds and blood, he was re-conducted to the Prefects, who conjectured that, after having endured so much contumely and suffering, he would readily comply with their demands. Again they were mistaken: Victor assured them that he would willingly accept those light and transitory pains, and whatever else they thought fit to inflict, as he judged all too trifling when compared with that happy eternity to which he was hastening. The Prefects strove to convince

him, that the happiness of which he spake was only an imaginary one, and that if he persisted in his disobedience to the gods and the Emperor, he should certainly travel the same road to that fantastical bliss as his pretended Saviour had gone before him! Upon this Victor addressed the Magistrates and the company present on the truths of the Gospel, and the folly of Paganism; and, in answer to the objection which had been raised, that the confidence of the Christian was ill-founded and irrational, informed them, that the readiness of the disciples of Christ to endure any trial, and the alacrity and even joy with which they met the most painful and ignominious deaths, were sufficient proof of the assurance which they entertained of the object of their hope; and that he also was ready in his own person to give an example of what he had said. The Prefects now resolved to apply the torture, but differed in opinion as to the manner of it; and so high did the mutual contest rise, that Eutychius, one of the Magistrates, indignantly left the court, when Asterius, the other, who remained on the bench, commanded Victor to be stretched upon the rack, the pain of which he bore with calmness and serenity. The executioners were fatigued with their employment, and subdued by the patience of the martyr, who was then conveyed to a dark dungeon.* During this incarceration, Victor was instrumental in the conversion of his jailers, Alexander, Longinus, and Felician, who were baptized by a Priest whom he caused to be provided for that purpose. The conversion of these men becoming known, it speedily reached the ears of the Emperor, who condemned them to death, and Victor again to be placed upon the rack. The martyr, being deeply concerned for these new converts, exhorted them to persevere, and referred them to the favour which they received from the great Head of the church, in being called to suffer for his sake so speedily after they had embraced the faith. They were all taken to a public place in the city, which was soon filled with a motley group composed of Christians and Pagans; the former, that they might receive consolation and instruction; and the latter, to satiate their malice towards the enemies of the gods. The three soldiers adhering to their profession lost their heads.

Victor was left alone: the delay of his anticipated happiness, it is said, drew tears from his eyes. It did not, however, continue long; for shortly after, when engaged in prayer, the executioners took him, and, according to the mandate of the Emperor, placed him a second time upon the rack, and, after beating him unmercifully with batons, conveyed him back to prison, where he remained three days, when Herculeus again resolved to hear him, and ordered a small altar or shrine to be introduced, and commanded Victor forthwith to offer incense to

* Alban Butler, who gluts his readers even to loathing with the wonders attendant upon martyrdom, says, that Jesus Christ appeared to Victor when upon the rack, holding a cross in his hands, and gave him his peace, and told him that he suffered in his servants, and crowned them after their victory. When thrown into the dark dungeon, he says, that Almighty God visited him by his angels, the prison was filled with a light brighter than that of the sun, and the martyr sung with the angels the praises of God. The soldiers who guarded the prison, seeing this light, were surprised at the miracle, and, casting themselves at the martyr's feet, desired baptism.—But, enough.

Jupiter, who, being transported with a holy indignation at such a proposal, stepped forward and overthrew the altar and the idol that stood upon it with his foot.* This so enraged the Emperor, that he directed the offending member to be cut off; and being still more irritated at the patience and fortitude of the martyr, he condemned him to be thrown into a mill and crushed to pieces by the stones. This barbarous order was punctually obeyed; but before he died, the machinery of the mill broke, and the sufferer was dragged forth terribly bruised, his bones fractured, and his body miserably torn, insomuch that it was impossible for his life to be preserved: but Herculeus had not the mercy to let him quietly expire, and therefore finished his work by ordering him to be beheaded.

The treasury from which our professed and olden martyrologists have obtained their materials, has generally been certain separate treatises entitled "Acts of the Martyrs;" a series of compositions on the whole extravagant in style, and of doubtful authenticity. Some of them are translated in the first volume of Foxe's "Acts and Monuments," as well as in Fleury's "Ecclesiastical History;" but the best collection of them is that of Ruinart, contained in one folio volume. Of these histories a few, such as those of Cyprian, Ignatius, and Polycarp, and some others, are told in a simple and dignified manner; an observation scarcely applicable in any degree to the remainder. On examining some of the narratives contained in these "Acts," we are astonished at their unnatural and improbable character. A condensed enumeration of tortures, varied only by the repartees of the sufferer, may for a few lines excite our horror; but when continued through many pages, as Dr. Maitland† justly observes, "imagination refuses to grant such powers of endurance to frail humanity. A difficulty meets us at the outset: these 'Acts' are given as an official report of the trials, entered in the Roman records, and privately obtained for the Christians by Sebastus, an archer on duty at the time. Yet their style betrays a Christian author; for they contain abundance of speeches attributed to the martyrs, related in Christian language. Indeed the chief point of the narrative is made to lie in these speeches, generally highly figurative, and the mistakes of the Pagans arising from a too literal interpretation of them." The writers who flourished soon after the time of Constantine, literally rivalled each other in elaborating highly coloured descriptions of the horrors of martyrdom. Prudentius‡ was

* The Council of Eliberis, or Elvira, held about the year 306. "The sixtieth Canon of which deprives those of the title of martyrs who are killed for overthrowing idols publicly, because the Gospel commands us not to do any such thing, and we never read that it was practised by the Christians in the time of the Apostles." Dupin, Eccles. Hist., vol. i., p. 593, fol., Dublin, 1723. See also Labbe, Concil. Sacrosanct., tom i., p. 967.

† Maitland, The Church in the Catacombs, p. 98.

‡ Aurelius Clemens Prudentius, a Christian poet, was born in Spain, probably at Saragossa, in 348, and was brought up to the legal profession, and, after practising at the bar, became chief Magistrate in two considerable cities. He also served in the army; and obtained employment at the court of Honorius. In 407, he went to Rome, and after his return to Spain passed his time in religious exercises and studious pursuits. Nothing further is known of his life, nor where it terminated. His poems consist of Psychomachia, or the Soul's Combat; Cathemerinon, or Hymns for Festivals; Apotheosis, or, On Deity, against the Heretics; Hamartigena, or, the Origin of Sin; Peristephanon, or, the Crowns of Martyrs; and two books against the Oration of

the first of those who wrote in metre, but not always in poetry, and he brought out the whole subject with fresh embellishments, and was greatly admired by contemporaries and successors. His various descriptions of the tortures endured by the sufferers, Ruinart terms "admirable!" The general tendency of such extravagant productions as written by Prudentius, is to make us believe that the martyrs suffered no pain, and had therefore little merit in facing the torments prepared for them; while they exhibit the victim and the executioner as two combatants;* the one backed by miracles, and supported by insensibility to pain; the other armed with the most fearful instruments that human or diabolical cruelty could invent. In this novel species of single combat, in which high words were not wanting on either side, the Pagan was invariably worsted.†

Illustrative of the foregoing remarks, we insert the following account. When the edicts of Diocletian against the Christian church were published, Flavius Clemens Numerianus Maximus was Governor of Cilicia; and being on a visit at Pompeiopolis, Eutolmus and Palladius presented before him three Christians, of different ages and countries; and being on his way to Tarsus the metropolis of the province, he directed them to be conveyed thither. The name of the senior confessor was Tarachus, a Roman by extraction, though born in Isauria: he had served in the army, but had procured his discharge, for fear of being compelled to do something that was contrary to the Christian name and character. He was at this time about sixty-five years old. The second was Probus, a native of Pamphilia, who had relinquished a considerable fortune that he might be more at liberty to serve Christ. The last was Andronicus, a young nobleman connected with one of the principal families of the city of Ephesus. Demetrius, a Centurion in the army, placed them before the Governor's tribunal, and preferred the charge, by stating that the individuals at the bar were of the impious sect termed Christians, and disobedient to the orders of the Emperors. Maximus, addressing himself to Tarachus, said that he commenced with him, as being the first in rank and age; and then asked his name. Tarachus promptly replied, that he was a Christian. The Governor requested him not to mention that hated name, but to say simply what his name was; and, upon Tarachus repeating the same reply, ordered him to be struck upon the face, commanding him not to give such perverse responses. Tarachus then assured him, that he had acknowledged his real name; but if he were desirous of knowing the cognomen which he had received from his parents, it was Tarachus; and the name by which he was known in the army was Victor. Maximus then required to know what station he held. He replied, that he was a soldier; and being born at Claudiopolis, in Isauria, he enjoyed the privilege of a Roman citizen, but had quitted the service on account of his religion. To which the Governor most

Symmachus, Prefect of Rome, for the Altar of Victory, and the Restoration of the Temples and Rites of the Pagan Religion. His works have been chiefly read and edited in Roman Catholic countries.

* "Hinc Martyr, illinc carnifex," as Prudentius has it.

† Maitland, Church in the Catacombs, p. 107.

dishonourably replied, that he had been dismissed the army on account of his abominable principles, and was considered unworthy to draw a sword in the Emperor's defence. The Governor then assumed a milder demeanour, and expressed compassion for his grey hairs, and urged him to sacrifice to the gods, as the certain road to promotion and honour. To this the martyr replied, that the Princes were themselves misled! Maximus resented this affront by commanding the confessor to be again smitten on the mouth. He replied, that he had said, and always would say, that the Princes were deceived, and in this respect were like unto other men. The Governor requested him to throw aside such idle thoughts, and at once sacrifice to the gods of his forefathers. He answered, "I do worship the God of my father, not indeed with the blood of victims, but with the sacrifice of a clean heart." "Well," said Maximus, "my regard for your age and hoary hairs obliges me to advise you to lay aside these foolish notions, and to submit." Tarachus * said, that he never had opposed the laws of his ancestors. "Draw near and sacrifice, then," replies the Governor. "No," said the martyr, "my regard for the laws of my ancestors will not allow me to be guilty of such a wicked action." "Is there, then, any law," says Maximus, "but that which I now press?" "Yes," replied Tarachus, "and you transgress it, by worshipping stocks and stones, the work of men's hands." The Governor, resenting this freedom, ordered him to be struck on the head; but the undaunted Christian assured him, he would not abandon the means of saving his soul, though he was pleased to call his perseverance folly. Maximus then informed him, that he would undertake to cure him, and to bring him to his senses. Tarachus replied, that he might do what he pleased with his body, which was in his power; but he could not hurt his soul. Maximus then ordered him to be severely scourged; when he was told by the martyr, that he had made him wise, for the blows, said he, which he received, inspired him with fresh courage, and increased his confidence in God and in Christ. This sentence gave the Governor an opportunity of accusing the confessor with inconsistency in worshipping two gods; to which he replied, that he acknowledged but one true God; and Maximus bade him remember, that he had given that appellation directly to Christ. He then without reserve

* We give a very abridged relation of that which is contained in the Acts of Tarachus and Probus, as published by Ruinart, and contained in the voluminous work of Alban Butler, solely on account of their extravagant and doubtful character. Happily for the reader, says Maitland, his attention is continually diverted from the mutilation of the martyrs, to their successful wit-combats with their judge. "Rub him with salt," said the Governor. "Salt me more, that I may be incorruptible," replies Tarachus. When taunted by Maximus with his blindness, he returns the reproach, and boasts of superior inward vision. He professes to be armed from head to foot, clothed in divine panoply: Maximus, who only sees his naked body one undistinguishable wound, is necessarily puzzled by the assertion, and has recourse to fresh barbarities to maintain his credit. Lastly, Maximus dismisses him, promising to think over some fresh tortures for their next meeting. These Acts of Tarachus bear strong marks of forgery: the martyrs are declared to have suffered in the first consulate of Diocletian, that is, in the year 284; whereas the Diocletian persecution did not begin till 303, after an interval of fifty years' peace. The Prefect is also made to quote the "Acts of Pilate," which are known to have been invented by Maximin, certainly not earlier than 303. See Euseb., Eccles. Hist.; and Maitland, Church in the Catacombs.

stated the divinity of the Redeemer, whom he recognised as the Son of God, and the hope of the Christians; and declared him to be the author of salvation to all that believe. He would doubtless have continued his address, had he not been interrupted by the Governor, who required him immediately to sacrifice: upon his refusal he was conducted to the prison.

The Centurion forthwith introduced Probus, who, upon Maximus demanding his name, said, that the most valuable name which he bore was that of Christian, but the cognomen by which he was recognised among men was that of Probus. "The name of Christian," said Maximus, "will be of little service to you: therefore be advised, sacrifice to the gods, and thus secure the Emperor's favour." Probus replied, that he neither wanted to recommend himself to the esteem of the Emperor, nor desired the friendship of Maximus; who immediately commanded him to be scourged in his presence. Demetrius then requested him to have some regard for himself, and to observe how the blood streamed from his body. "My body," said the sufferer, "is in your power, and the severities which you inflict are not disagreeable." "What," said Maximus, "does he still persist in his madness?" He then, having received the lash only on his back, was ordered to receive the punishment in the opposite position. While thus tormented, the martyr invoked the assistance of the Almighty; upon which the executioners asked him, where was his assistance when they applied the torture? He replied, that He was always ready to help, and that the numerous acts of cruelty invented by the Governor could not shake his confidence in God. Maximus now resolved to try further tortures, and ordered him to be taken away, to be laden with irons, and his hands and feet to be fastened in the stocks.

Andronicus was then placed at the bar, and similar questions proposed; to which he replied, "I am a native of Ephesus, and descended from one of the first families in that city." The Governor advised him to waive all idle speeches, and be ruled by him; that he was desirous to use him with all tenderness; and that if he would honour the Emperors, and sacrifice to the gods whom his forefathers had owned, he should be rewarded for his obedience. To this persuasive language Andronicus replied, "It is with justice you call them the gods of your fathers; for you are no better than the sons of the evil one, who do his works." Maximus, incensed at this retort, insinuated, that the ardour of his youth inspired him with insolence. To this the prisoner replied, that though he appeared young, his soul notwithstanding was robust in manhood, and prepared for the severest trials. The Governor then commanded him to forbear his gabbling, and to sacrifice. Andronicus assured him, that his resolution was the same as those who had already passed before him; and that he was ready to encounter suffering, but could not renounce the faith. He was sentenced to the same punishment, and then to the prison. Soon after Maximus commanded these undaunted confessors to be brought before him for a second trial: commencing his interrogations with Tarachus, he observed that old age was generally honoured, on

account of its being accompanied with prudence and discretion; therefore he had reason to anticipate that change in his sentiments which would not fail to recommend him to the esteem of his superiors. The sufferer replied that he was a Christian, and most cordially wished that both the Governor and the Emperors would open their eyes, and correct their mistaken notions. This sentence provoked Maximus to order him to be struck in the face, accompanied with the admonition, "Quit your folly;" remarking that his teeth were loosed, and desiring him to consider what he brought upon himself by such obstinacy. Tarachus assured him that he could not hurt him; though he were to deprive him of all his limbs, he should nevertheless stand firm through the strength which he derived from the Lord Jesus Christ. After this the martyr was silent; but so great was the cruelty of the Magistrate, that he ordered him again to be struck, and then commanded to speak. The confessor urged the loss of his teeth, and the blows which he had received on his mouth and face, as a reason for his silence. "And yet," said Maximus, "you remain obstinate: come at once, and sacrifice to the gods." "No," replied the old man, "though I have almost lost the use of my speech, yet you will never remove me from my resolution, which increases in strength by the sufferings I have been called to endure." The tyrant assured him that it was in his power to overcome this resolution. But Tarachus said he trusted in God, who would impart help proportioned to his day. The Governor then ordered his hands to be held open, and fire to be applied; and after enduring other tortures, he was taken back to prison.*

Probus again appeared, and was asked if he were ready to offer the required sacrifice. He replied, "I come better prepared than before, because what I have suffered at your hands has tended to confirm me in my resolution; and I trust you will never induce me to adore gods which I know not." After a short discourse between the Governor and the martyr, concerning the divinity of the pagan deities, the latter concluded by declaring, that he would not own a plurality of gods, and that he was resolved to adhere to the worship of one Supreme Being, who alone deserved that title. Maximus attempted to take advantage of this profession, and asked him then to sacrifice to Jupiter whom he recognised as the great and invincible god! "Shall I pay," replied Probus, "divine honours to one who married his own sister? that infamous debauchee, as he is described even by your own poets!" The enraged Governor ordered his mouth to be stopped by blows, as a caution against blasphemy. The martyr could not forbear complaining of the injustice of this proceeding, and observed, that the character of Jupiter had been drawn in the same light by those who professed to worship him, and appealed to his Judge for the truth of what he said; but Maximus, instead of listening to or answering him, ordered hot iron bars to be placed to his body, which he endured apparently without pain. He then commanded the applica-

* "Dentes ejus et linguam blasphemam tollite, et comburite, et cinerem facite, et ubique spargite, ut nemo de consortibus ejus impiis, aut de mulierculis aliqua colligat ut servet quasi pretiosum aliquid aut sanctum æstimet." (Ruinart, Acta Martyr., p. 444.)

tion of iron rendered more hot, and his body to be more closely pressed thereto; but the fire, according to human observation, seemed to lose its force. He was then directed to be stretched out, and scourged into obedience; but no acts of cruelty which the Governor could direct, nor the officers inflict, had any influence upon Probus, and he was remanded to prison.

Maximus now endeavoured to overcome Andronicus. He assured him that his companions who had been before him, had at last, though with great difficulty, acknowledged the gods of the empire; and that unless he followed their steps, he would make him a terrible example. To this the martyr replied, "Lay not, O Governor, such a weakness to the charge of those who have appeared before me in this cause; nor imagine it to be in your power to shake my fixed resolution with any artful speeches. I cannot believe that they have disobeyed the laws of their fathers, and renounced their hopes in our God, or obeyed your extravagant orders; nor will I fall short of them in faith and dependence upon one common Saviour: thus armed, I neither know your gods, nor fear your authority." Probus was then, by the Governor's authority, cruelly scourged, until his body was one continued wound. He was then directed to be rubbed with salt, and his body turned, that every part might partake of the marks of his hatred to the religion of Christ. Additional tortures were inflicted upon these men, and that of the most sanguinary and barbarous kind; but to no purpose: they were therefore adjudged to be thrown to the wild beasts, and to the amphitheatre the guards were obliged to carry them. The appearance of such melancholy and shocking objects caused a confused murmur among the spectators, many of whom expressed indignation at the proceedings of the Governor, and left the spectacles. Several beasts were let loose; but all refused to touch them, and ultimately they were put to death by the sword.*

Romanus, a Deacon in the church of Cæsarea, followed in the wake of Tarachus to the kingdom of God. He was at Antioch when the edict for the demolition of the churches came to that city, and hesitated not to inform the Christians that "grievous wolves would enter in among them, not sparing the flock," but exhorted them not to fear; he nevertheless had the sorrow to behold great numbers flocking to the idol-temples, in obedience to the commands of the Emperor: his spirit was stirred within him, so that he could not forbear attempting to save some who were evidently on the road to perdition; and in this enterprise he was successful. The Governor of the East, whom some term Asclepiades, being then at Antioch with Galerius, was

* In the apparently fabulous account of these martyrs, in what are called their "Acts," we are told that Maximus commanded their bodies to be intermingled with those of the gladiators who had been slain; and also to be guarded that night by six soldiers, lest the Christians should carry them off. The night was very dark, and a violent storm of thunder and rain dispersed the guards. The faithful distinguished the three bodies by a miraculous star (!!) or ray of light, which streamed on each of them. They carried off the precious treasures on their backs, and hid them in a hollow cave in the neighbouring mountains, where the Governor was not able, by any search he could make, to find them. Three fervent Christians, Marcian, Felix, and Verus, retired into this cave of the rock, being resolved to spend there all the remainder of their lives. (!!) What next?

informed of the conduct of Romanus in exhorting the Christians rather to die than abjure the faith of Christ. He was ordered to be apprehended and brought before him. The martyr went cheerfully to the tribunal, where he not only confessed the fact of which he was accused, but also asserted that he was ready and prepared to undergo any punishment in a cause that was so great and glorious. The sanguinary Judge at once ordered him to the rack, and his bowels to be torn out; but one present informing him that Romanus was of noble birth, and that it was unseemly for him to be put to such an ignoble death, he ordered him to be scourged, and his body to be torn with the *ungulæ*.* While he was in the hands of the executioner, he continued intrepid and invulnerable; repeated his profession, and reproached the Governor with cruelty, at the same time requesting the executioner not to show him favour on account of his nobility; "for," said he, "it is not the blood of my ancestors, but my Christian profession, that makes me truly noble." Asclepiades exhorted him to obey the Emperor's commands; but the martyr replied, that he acknowledged Christ as his supreme King, and was under no obligation to comply with the mandate of an earthly Monarch, when such clashed with the duty he owed to the Most High. His flesh was then lanced with knives until the bones appeared: Romanus then assured the Governor, that he was not grieved that he should be so mangled; he sorrowed

* *Ungula*, an instrument of torture, in the shape of a talon or claw, which was thrust into the sides of criminals. Prudent.: *Ungula, Ferramentum mucronatum, quo sulcatim corpora laniabantur et fodiebantur.* Ugutio: *Ungula, genus tormenti, quia effodiat, ut fides inveniatur.* Papias: *Ungulæ, genus tormentorum, dictæ quod effodiant, hæ et fidiculæ.* Cyprian, de Lapsis: *Jam lassum corpus nunc flagella scinderent, contunderent fustes, nunc equuleus extenderet, nunc ungula effoderet, nunc flamma torreret:* Idem de Laude martyr. *Non prædurantibus licet costis ungula recurrat in vulnus. Prudent. in Romano Mart.*

Scindunt utrimque milites deterrimi,
Mucrone hiulco pensilis latus viri,
Sulcant per artus longa tractim vulnera
Obliqua rectis, recta transversis secant.

Lib. Peristeph. l. 451.

Illa virga et secures et bisulcas ungulas,
Ultro fortis expetebat, &c.

Alibi non semel, in S. Vincentio, in S. Agnete, &c. Hieron. Epist. 49. *Cum lividas carnes ungula cruenta pulsaret et sulcatis lateribus dolor quæreret veritatem.* Castinus episc. Toletanus Hymno in S. Christoph.

Sanctum jubet Christophorum pensum, rudibus ungulis,
Denudatas ejus costas carnibus exciperent.
Strabus in Mammete:
——————— Jubet altius ergo,
Sanctus suspendi, tormentisque acribus amens,
Pulsat utrumque latus, dum carpitur unguibus uncis,
Nullam dat Mammes vocem.

Adde Acta proconsularia Mart. apud Baron. An. 285, N. 5. Acta S. S. Phileæ, Philoromi, N. 3. Acta S. Saturnini. N. 8, &c. Occurrit passim in Vitis Sanctorum. *Lacerationes*, ungularum scilicet, *Eculeis atque lacerationibus subjacere*, in l. 4, Cod. Th. de Numerariis. *Lacerationes membrorum*, apud Senecam, lib. 3. De Irâ, cap. 3. Vide Gallonium. *Ungulare, exungulare.* Ungulis subjicere, ungularum tormentum inferre. Vita S. Potiti mart. ed. M. S. Neapol. cap. 6. *Ferantur scilicet ferreæ ungulæ et unguletur.* Ejusdem vita ex. M. S. velseri cap. 4. *Iterum jussit eum exungulari.* Acta S. Eulaliæ. Barcinon. no. 6. Jussit eculeum afferri, et suspendi eam, quamdiu exungularetur. Du Cange, Gloss.

the most, that, being involved in such fearful error, Asclepiades endeavoured to seduce and compel others to embrace the same. Then descanting on the duties which all men owe to the living God, he exhorted all around to worship him. This so enraged the Governor, that he instantly commanded his face to be disfigured in the same way in which his body had been mangled; but the patience of Romanus triumphed over the cruelty of the Judge, and he continued to exhort the spectators to embrace the worship of the Most High. In the meantime the martyr betrayed no emotion of pain, nor regarded the threatening of Asclepiades; but proceeded with his discourse on the truths of Christianity with perspicuity and force, until the tyrant, amazed at his fortitude, commanded the executioners to withhold their hands; and, after reviling the sufferer, threatened him with the flames, blasphemously taunting him by saying, that his crucified Christ was but a God of yesterday, while the deities of the Gentiles were of the highest antiquity.

Prudentius * informs us, that Romanus offered to abide the deci-

* Prudentius, who was one of the earliest Martyrologists, in his work entitled, "Peristephanon," dedicates a hymn to Romanus: it is the most finished, and may be legitimately taken as a sample of the whole. The history of the sufferings of Romanus is a poem of eleven hundred and forty lines. The speeches of the hero, though grandiloquent, and often out of place, contain much that is striking; and constitute a somewhat powerful apology for Christianity. After the execution of the sentence,—

> "Tundatur, inquit tergum, crebris ictibus
> Plumboque cervix verberata extuberet;"

the martyr, nothing overwhelmed by the hail-storm of the leaden scourges, (pulsatus illâ grandine,) but retaining both sense and speech, addresses Asclepiades in an oration of two hundred and seventy lines, enumerating all the crimes attributed to the heathen deities. The Judge, who had suffered him to proceed so far without interruption, roused at length by the oft-repeated question, "Would you have me worship such a god?" attempts a reply: he argues, that Rome had obtained her present glory under the patronage of Jupiter Stator, and that it would be ungrateful to leave the worship of the eternal gods who presided over the building of the city, for a novelty just called into existence; and, after a thousand consulates had rolled away, to embrace the new Christian dogma. The flesh is now cut from the bones of Romanus, while he carries on a comparison between the pains he endures, and those attendant upon sickness. "The *ungulæ* tearing the sides," he observes, "give no pang so sharp as those of pleurisy; the red-hot plates are less scorching than the burning of fever; nor are my swelled and tortured limbs more painful than those of persons suffering from gout." His constancy is next put to the proof by fearful mutilations; after which he delivers an harangue on the cross, and the plan of redemption; then adducing the command not to cast pearls before swine, he professes his intention of remaining silent for the future. He adds, however, that if the Judge will fix upon any child of seven years old or under, he will pledge himself to follow whatever the infant may declare to be the truth. Acting upon this suggestion, the President seizes an infant in the crowd, and, after obtaining from it a confession of Christianity, orders it to be scourged. In this scene, the severity of the punishment, its effects upon the bystanders, the weeping executioners, but, most of all, the conduct of the mother of the child, in reproving it for begging of her a cup of water, and referring it to a long list of Scripture martyrs by way of consolation, have afforded Prudentius abundant scope for the horrible descriptions in which he apparently delights:—

> "Vix hæc profatus, pusionem præcipit
> Sublime tollant, et manu pulsent nates;
> Mox et remotâ veste virgis verberent,
> Tenerumque ductis ictibus tergum secent,
> Plus unde lactis, quam cruoris defluat.
> Impacta quotiens corpus attigerat salix,

sion of an infant, whose age should be free from malice, or any other vice, and to rest the truth of the Christian religion upon such a test. His request was granted; and a child was called out of the crowd, and placed before him: he was then asked, Whether men should adore one God in Christ, or worship many gods? He replied, "What men affirm to be God must be One, and as this One is Christ, he must of necessity be God; for that there are many gods, even we children," said he, "cannot believe." The Governor was exceedingly angry at this; and calling him a young villain and a traitor, asked him where he had learned this lesson? The child replied, "From my mother." At this Asclepiades was fearfully irritated, and cruelly commanded the infant to be scourged. At this mandate the multitude wept, but the mother encouraged her boy. The executioners plucked the skin and hair from the child's head, who at the same time was encouraged by his parent saying, "Though you suffer here, yet you will shortly be with Christ, who will adorn thy naked head with a crown of unfading glory." The child smiled upon his mother, and upon those who performed the will of the Governor, and endured their tortures with manlike perseverance and fortitude. The Magistrate, finding the child invincible, and himself vanquished, ordered him to be committed to

> Tenui rubebant sanguine uda vimina
> Quem plaga flerat roscidis livoribus.
> * * * * * * *
> At sola mater hisce lamentis caret,
> Soli sereno frons renidet gaudio."

The child, though exhausted by loss of blood, revives and smiles; and during its decapitation, which soon follows, the mother is employed in singing the versicle, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." The torturing of Romanus now proceeds with redoubled vigour; and after several miracles, only serving to provoke Asclepiades, and prolong the sufferings of the martyr, he is despatched by strangling. The writers who flourished soon after the time of Constantine, vied with one another in elaborating highly-coloured descriptions of the horrors of martyrdom. The hymn of Prudentius, from which we have given a quotation, is sufficient to shake our faith in him as a Martyrologist: without reckoning the miracles, the whole story is a string of improbabilities: the martyr is represented as betraying an infant to certain destruction; the mother displays a want of feeling scarcely credible, and altogether odious; and the infant itself, though lately weaned, exhibits the understanding and resolution of mature age. The profusion of useless miracles answers no end, and is supported by no evidence; indeed, the existence of miraculous adjuncts to martyrdom must be generally doubtful, from the difficulty of obtaining dispassionate testimony regarding them. It is not from a highly-excited crowd of spectators, earnestly watching for some supernatural interposition, and ready to magnify any event that appeared strange or unusual; it is not from such, still less from those who have only listened to *their* descriptions, that satisfactory proof of miraculous occurrences can be obtained. There are, moreover, strong objections in the nature of these miracles: that God should deliver his servants from their enemies, or support them miraculously under torments, is perfectly in accordance with the tenor of the inspired records; but reason is staggered by the futility of the many prodigies described in connexion with the later martyrdoms. Romanus, having had his face completely cut to pieces, and being still enabled to speak distinctly, derives no relief from the supernatural aid: he is next delivered to another executioner, who cuts out his tongue. After the second mutilation, the martyr, silenced perforce, having no voice to send heavenward, no words with which to proclaim his Master's triumph, draws from his inmost heart a long sigh; and, supplicating with a groan, breaks forth,—"Who speaks of Christ, never yet wanted a tongue; nor asked by what organs words are formed, when the Giver of words is the subject of speech." Yet no conversion of the bystanders ensues; nor does any effect follow the miracles, excepting that of exasperating the Judge. The same want of result is observable in most of the prodigies related by Prudentius. (Maitland, Church in the Catacombs.)

the dungeon without nourishment, and the torments of Romanus not only to be renewed but increased. He remained inflexible; and therefore Asclepiades condemned both him and the infant to death; Romanus to be burnt, and the child to be beheaded. As they were conducted to the place of execution, Romanus told the Governor that he appealed from his unrighteous decision to the throne of Christ, who was the Judge of all men, who will reward us according to our deeds: "not," said the martyr, "that I fear thy torments, but that thy conduct may be fully known." When they arrived at the place of execution, the officers demanded the child of its mother, who had taken it in her arms: she, after kissing the infant, delivered him to the executioner, praising God that out of a babe he had perfected praise to the confusion of his enemies. The head of the little one being severed from the body, the mother took it up and placed it upon her bosom. Romanus was fastened to a post, and the wood * laid in order around him. A sudden fall of rain prevented the pile taking fire. Asclepiades attributed this interposition to the influence of magic; and conveyed this calumny with so much address to the ears of Galerius, that he obtained permission to proceed to fresh tortures, and then to kill him in any way he thought proper. He first ordered his tongue to be cut out; and Eusebius and Chrysostom inform us, that he not only survived the operation, but actually spake more distinctly than he had done before. The martyr was remanded to his prison; but the Governor was surprised to hear that he still possessed the power of speech, and sent for the surgeon who executed this part of the sentence, whom he charged with favouring the criminal, or with being himself a Christian. If what Eusebius inform us be true, he had been a disciple of Christ, but had apostatized on account of the persecution. The surgeon, however, had for some cause preserved the tongue of Romanus, produced it to the Governor, and assured him that, according to the rules of nature, the martyr could not at that time be alive. The same experiment was tried on a condemned malefactor, who expired shortly after: the Governor was in no degree changed; and Romanus, after remaining several months in prison, was ultimately strangled. An innumerable company of martyrs suffered at this time, of whom but little is recorded. It matters not: their record is on high!

We feel the same objections to the statements which are extant with regard to the martyrdom of Eulalia. She was a native of Merida, in Spain, and educated in the principles of Christianity. The amusements which commonly occupy the youthful mind, possessed no charms in the estimation of Eulalia. She was but twelve years of age when the persecution under Diocletian commenced; and her mother, finding her anxious to become a martyr, though she knew not what it

* When the Judge had informed him that he was to die by the flames, with a cheerful countenance and a most ardent mind he received the sentence, and was led away. He was then tied to the stake; and when the wood was heaped up around him, and they were about kindling the pile, only awaiting the word from the expected Emperor, he (Romanus) exclaimed, "Where then is the fire?" Saying this, he was summoned again before the Emperor to be subjected to new tortures, and had his tongue cut out, which he bore with great fortitude. (Euseb., De Martyr. Palest., cap. 2.)

was to suffer, to prevent her falling into the hands of the persecutors, conveyed her into the country: she, however, speedily returned to Merida; and on the following day, either surrendered herself, or was apprehended, as a Christian. The early Martyrologists say that she went herself into the court, and reproached the Judge, in no mild terms, on account of the folly and stupidity of Paganism. She was placed before the tribunal, and the Magistrate, evidently irritated by the language which Eulalia had previously used, addressed the executioners, and commanded them to pull her out by the hair of the head, and torture her to the uttermost. "Let her feel," said he, "the power of the gods of the land, and what the imperial government of a Prince is. Nevertheless, sturdy girl, I would desire thee, before thou die, revoke this thy wickedness. Remember what pleasures thou mayest enjoy from the honourable house to which thou dost belong: thy fallen house follow thee to death with lamentable tears. What meanest thou? Wilt thou kill thyself? Doth not the reverend piety of thy ancestry move thee? Behold the furniture which is prepared for thy lingering and painful death: either thou shalt be beheaded with this sword, or else by those wild beasts thou shalt be torn in pieces, or consumed in the flames. How easy it is for thee to escape all these punishments! Take and put with thy fingers a little salt and incense into the censers, and thou shalt escape." To this the martyr made no answer; but, being in a state of great excitement, she spat in the Magistrate's face, she threw down the idols,* and

* In narrating the story of Eulalia, Prudentius highly approves of her bold and insulting bearing towards the pagan authorities. That young lady, according to the poet, had from the cradle given promise of a fierce and unsociable disposition, calculated to distinguish her in the religious world then existing. On the outbreak of persecution she was removed to the country by her heathen parents, and even shut up, to prevent any collision with the authorities. On a dark and silent night she escaped from her home; and, guided by angelic torch-bearers, made her way into the city. Early in the morning she presents herself at the tribunal, and vehemently abuses the Emperor and his gods. She earnestly requests that her bodily frame may be torn to pieces, as a thing useless in itself, and unworthy the trouble of preserving. Provoked by her language, the Prætor ordered the Lictors to bind her; but, before inflicting punishment, he sets before her the miseries which she draws upon herself and her parents, the prospects of happiness which her home offers, and the speedy marriage which awaits her. A grain of incense cast upon the coals is to be the sign of her recantation. To this she vouchsafes no verbal answer, but spits in the face of the Prætor, throws down the images, and kicks over the thurible. The two executioners immediately perform their office by tearing with the *ungulæ* her sides and bosom. In the gashes inflicted by the instrument, her excited imagination traces the letters of her Master's name; and her voice, unshaken by sob or sigh, joyfully proclaims his triumph. Torches are afterwards placed under her face, and this gives her an opportunity of ending her life by inhaling the flames of her burning hair. Prudentius, Ado, and even Aquilinus, mention the fact of a white dove issuing out of her mouth at the time of her departure, and of the fire quenched about her body; also of her person being covered miraculously with snow; with other things more, whereof Foxe sapiently observes, let every reader use his own judgment. (Aurel. Prudentii Peristeph., lib. 161, *et seq.*, p. 117. 8vo. Hanoviæ, 1613.

"Nec mora, carnifices gemini
Juncea pectora dilacerant;
Et latus ungula virgineum
Pulsat utrimque, et ad ossa secat
Eulaliâ numerante notas.
Scriberes ecce! mihi Domine
Quam juvat hos apices legere."—Peristephan. Prudentii, Hymn 9.

(See Maitland's Church in the Catacombs.)

scattered with her feet the heap of incense which was prepared for the ceremony. Then, without any hesitation, the executioners seized her, rent her delicate flesh with the *ungulæ*, and scorched her sides to the bone. They afterwards proceeded to the last and final torment, which not only embraced wounding and lacerating her sufficiently mangled body with the iron grate and hurdle, and terribly harrowing her flesh, but burned on every side, with illuminated torches, her bosom and sides: her hair hanging about her shoulders, in two parts divided, descended to the ground. But when the crackling flame flew about her face, and kindled her hair, she shortly after expired.

The numerous ill-concocted tales which emanated from the pen of Prudentius, and other early Martyrologists, are sufficiently annoying, because every principle of probability is violated, and between them and the authentic records of martyrdom there exists not the slightest analogy. Are we to suppose God, who gave the martyrs grace to suffer gloriously in his service, should have left them to disgrace that cause by vain bravado, or abusive retorts? And if the appearance of insensibility to pain is to be considered a test, these stoical confessors must be allowed infinitely to exceed Paul in fortitude: compared with his plea of citizenship, adduced to escape torture, their eager demand for more horrible inflictions must indicate vastly higher attainments in faith and piety. The physical effects of the torture are never taken into account in the later *Acta:* there is no collapse or prostration of strength, nor swooning from profuse bloodshed. We must either suppose that a miraculous agency had throughout averted the usual effects of mutilation, or that the entire narrative is grossly exaggerated. Generally speaking, the only sufferer is the Judge: he it is who rolls his eyes in frensy, and gnashes his teeth* with vexation; while the martyr finds vinegar mild, and salt without pungency; mistakes mustard for honey, and claps his blood-stained hands as the *ungulæ* rend his limbs.†

The author from whom we have last quoted very justly observes, that the character of the stories alluded to, and even their existence, are to be ascribed to the excited state of feeling which prevailed when they were written. Their general tendency is to make us believe that the martyrs suffered no pain, and had therefore little merit in facing the torments prepared for them; while they exhibit the victim and the executioner as two gladiators, the former supported and strengthened by miracles and his insensibility to pain, and the latter armed with the most fearful implements which human or diabolical cruelty could invent. Unfettered by the *nec Deus intersit* of the profane, the poet liberally introduces the agents of heavenly or hellish power: if there were no group of Oceanides to console the Christian Prometheus, there was a chorus of angels to sing around him, to scatter flowers on his

* "His persecutor saucius
Pallet, rubescit, æstuat,
Insana torquens lumina
Spumasque frendens egerit."
(Peristeph. Prudentii, Hymnus 2, S. Vincentii Martyris, l. 200. 8vo. Han., 1613.)

† Maitland's Church in the Catacombs, p. 100.

couch, and to fill the air with odours. The invisible Coryphæus invites him to heaven, and promises an eternal crown. "Arise, illustrious martyr, secure of thy reward; arise, and join our company, O warrior most invincible, braver than the bravest; thy tortures, cruel as they are, fear thee their conqueror."* Early in the history of persecution, we find Celsus reproaching the Christians with the example of the heathen Anaxarchus;† who, being pounded in a mortar, exclaimed, "Pound the shell of Anaxarchus, himself you touch not." "What," he asks, "did your Deity say in his sufferings comparable to this?" Not to be outdone by a Pagan, Martyrologists took care to record the fact, that Christians also could maintain composure under the greatest tortures; in course of time their hyperbolical language rather represented the martyrs as devoid of feeling, than resolute in enduring pain. In what might be termed a Christianized version of the speech of Anaxarchus, Prudentius makes his hero explain the principle of his fortitude. In reply to the taunt of Celsus concerning the superior fortitude of Anaxarchus, Origen remarks, that a pious submission to the will of God, or even a prayer, such as, "If it be possi-

* "Tear as you will this mangled frame,
Prone to mortality;
But think not, man of blood, to tame
Or take revenge on me.
You overlook, in thus supposing,
The nobler self that dwells within;
Throughout these cruel scenes reposing,
Where nought that injures enters in.

"This which you labour to destroy,
With so much madness, so much rage,
Is but a vessel form'd of clay,
Brittle and hasting to decay.
Let nobler foes your arms employ;
Subdue the' indomitable soul;
Which, when fierce whirlwinds rend the sky,
Looks on in calm security,
And only bows to God's control."

"Erras cruente, si meam
Te rere pœnam sumere,
Quùm membra morti obnoxia
Dilancinata interficis.
Est alter, est intrinsecus
Violare quem nullus potest,
Liber, quietus, integer,
Exsors dolorum tristum.
Hoc, quod laboras perdere
Tantis furoris viribus,
Vas est solutum ac fictile,
Quocumque frangendum modo."

The entire passage is imitated from Cyprian's Tract to Demetrian, cap. 8. "Another will suffer in me," said the humble Felicitas one hundred and eighty years earlier.

† "Anaxarchus, of Abdera, was a pupil of Diomenes, of Smyrna, or, according to some authorities, of Metrodorus of Chios. He attended Alexander in his Asiatic expedition, B.C. 334. It seems he was not much of a courtier, and that he took occasion to reprove the King sometimes. After Alexander's death, he fell into the hands of Nicocreon, tyrant of Cyprus, whose enmity he had incurred. Nicocreon avenged himself by pounding Anaxarchus in a mortar. The philosopher bore the torment with fortitude. Owing to his freedom from passion, and his tranquillity, he was called Eudæmonicus, or, 'the Happy.'" (Biog. Dict.)

ble, let this cup pass from me," is more truly magnanimous than the affectation of insensibility so lauded in the pagan sufferers. In the sixty-third canon of the Quinisextan Council, held A.D. 691, it was ordained, "That, whereas certain false stories of martyrdom had been circulated by the enemies of truth, calculated to bring the martyrs into discredit, and drive the hearers of such things into infidelity: we decree that they be not read in churches, but be committed to the flames." We are left in uncertainty as to the real character of the pseudo-Martyrologies referred to by the canon: that they were read in churches leads to the supposition that they were the production of Christian writers; who, by their unlimited indulgence in the licence of the times, had alarmed even a Council of the eighth century. Yet the severe expressions of the Quinisextan divines, "falso convictæ ..... ut martyres Dei ignominiâ efficerent," seem to be pointed against intentional traducers. In the Council held at Carthage, A.D. 401, it was ordered that all false martyr churches, and unauthenticated relics, should be destroyed; that none should be enrolled as martyrs without sufficient proof; and that altars consecrated upon the authority of dreams, and on other superstitious grounds, should be disavowed. The necessity for having some relic of a martyr, as a palladium to a church, was not felt generally till the fifth century; the follies to which it led, and the frauds resorted to in order to convince the people of the sanctity of particular bones and dust, are evidently implied in this canon.

A work which Dr. Maitland says made considerable pretensions to learning and accuracy, is the small folio of Gallonius, entitled, "De Cruciatibus Martyrum," * with plates. The ignorance of this writer concerning the power of human nature to support mutilation,† is even surpassed by his credulous eagerness to enumerate the accumulated horrors invented by the Monkish historians, who, in their dismal seclusion, allowed full licence to a morbid imagination. For Gallonius to state simply that the martyrs were suspended in various painful attitudes, would be insufficient for his purpose: sixteen varieties of hanging have been specified by him; and, to the dismay of the reader, the whole sixteen appear in engravings. The same principle of amplification runs throughout the work: lest we should think lightly of the pains of being burnt alive, if conveyed by mere verbal description, not less than nineteen modifications of this torture are figured and explained in the margin. All that lies between a slight historical mention of the details of martyrdom, and the drawings of Gallonius, is mere invention. We are told by ancient writers, that the *plumbatæ* were scourges laden with lead; and, beyond that, we know nothing of them: also, that the scorpion was a knotted stick, as opposed to the *virgæ læves:*

* De Sanct. Martyrum Cruciatibus Antonii Gallonii Rom. Congregationis Oratorii Presbyteri Liber cum Figuris Romæ in ære incisis per Antonium Tempestram. Et aliis ejusdem argumenti Libellis ex museo Raphaelis Tricheti du Fresne, fol., Parisiis, 1659.

† One of the sufferers has a row of large nails driven into his back; another is sitting up, alive, with the four limbs amputated, and left to bleed. One plate represents a Christian whose liver is torn out: the opposite page adds in explanation, that the Gentiles used to devour it, a statement which accounts for the fire and frying-pan in the fore ground.

when, therefore, we are shown an engraving fixing the size and shape of these instruments, we are imposed upon by the ingenuity of the artist. To justify these engravings, there should be in existence authentic relics of the objects, or descriptions by contemporary writers; but no such relics or descriptions can be found.* The collection of prints employed by Gallonius is also inserted in some other works, successive editions having been made from time to time. For instance: the supposed claw of an *ungula*, found in a cemetery, is published with due honours by its discoverer; another author, who has not seen the original, and is nevertheless better informed regarding it, adds to it a handle; a third puts it, in its complete form, into the hands of a ferocious executioner, and buries the points in the sides of a Christian. A favourite subject with the early Martyrologists, and not overlooked by Gallonius, is the treatment to which the Christian virgins were exposed in the persecutions. Between the desire to magnify the indignities offered to them, and at the same time to exhibit them as coming off with undiminished honour, these writers are sorely perplexed. The usual custom is to introduce a miracle, by which the spouses of Christ are rescued from impending fate, which on some occasions is admitted to have befallen them. Some of the latest histories of martyrdom are worked up into a complete romance, consisting of the adventures and escapes of the virgins from the perils to which they were exposed. Several tales of this sort are to be found in the Ecclesiastical History of Nicephorus. Instance the following:— A young lady, of extraordinary beauty, received the sentence described as common in the Diocletian persecution. To the first person who gained access to her she represented herself as an enchantress, skilled in the knowledge of poisons and their antidotes: on condition of receiving no insult from him, she proposed to render him invulnerable to steel, by a preparation which she had discovered. "But you will, of course," she added, "wish to see its efficacy proved, before concluding the agreement." Immediately producing an ointment, she applied it to her neck, directing the youth to draw his sword, and use his utmost endeavours to inflict a wound. Whether deceived by her manner, or altogether unacquainted with the master-spirit of the time, he obeyed; nor was his knowledge of the true Christian character advanced, when he saw with horror the head of his victim rolling at his feet.†

Agnes ranks high on the pages of ecclesiastical history as a martyr: she was a native of Rome, and of noble parentage. Some historians have recorded very much respecting her, especially with regard to

* Stories regarding martyrdom never lose by repetition. In the massacre of the Huguenots, it is often stated that sixty thousand persons perished in Paris; whereas Bananni declares, officially, that sixty thousand persons *were employed* in the slaughter, and that they destroyed four thousand of their enemies. (Numismata Romana, opposite the engraving of the medal.) Again: Ruinart says, that Domitius collected seven books of edicts remaining in force against the Christians: Lactantius, from whom he professes to quote, mentions the edicts of the persecutors as contained in the seventh book of the laws collected by Domitius. (Institutiones, lib. v., cap. 2.)

† Maitland's Church in the Catacombs, p. 115. The able author refers his readers for other narrations of a similar description, both curious and improbable, to Fleury, Hist. Ecclesiast., livre viii., chap. 36.

certain strange miracles wrought by her during the progress of her eventful history, which Foxe the Martyrologist hesitates to record, because of the incredibility of their history, and professes himself to be satisfied with the testimony of Prudentius.* She appears to have been a remarkable instance of the power of divine grace. Ambrose and Augustine say that she was about thirteen years of age when she obtained the martyr's crown. Her personal accomplishments brought around her a crowd of admirers, all of whom were rejected, inasmuch as Agnes resolved not to be unequally yoked with a Pagan : her suitors were exasperated at her repulses, and, taking advantage of the persecution, delivered her into the hands of the Magistrates as a Christian. The Judge before whom she was taken endeavoured to shake her steadfastness by tender and affectionate expressions ; but finding her soul endued with even masculine courage, and proof against his devices, he had recourse to everything that could terrify and amaze. The various instruments of torture were shown her : she was alike unmoved, and betrayed no emotions of fear. These efforts proving ineffectual, she was then forcibly taken to the altars of the pagan deities, in order that she might be compelled to scatter incense in the fire. All, however, that her persecutors were enabled to achieve, was to elicit from the youthful martyr a more triumphant and bold confession of her faith in Christ. The Judge, confounded at her obstinacy, and manifest indifference to life, imagined that she might be more successfully attacked by an attempt upon her chastity : he accordingly threatened to send her to a place where she would be exposed to the rude and licentious attacks of the libidinous and the profane. Agnes, confiding in the protection of the Most High, without hesitation assured the Magistrate, that he might indeed stain his sword with her blood ; but that it would be beyond his power to dishonour her person, which she had given to Christ her God. Enraged with her dauntless demeanour, he prepared to carry his threat into execution. Agnes was led to an infamous place ; but the Almighty manifested himself in her behalf, who is said to have filled all who were present with respect and esteem for her bordering upon awe, so that none dared to look upon her, much less venture to approach her.† Transported with rage, the Judge commanded her to be beheaded, that he might forthwith be rid of the sight of one whose innocence and weakness were a standing reproach to his injustice and cruelty. She heard the sentence with pleasure, and went to her execution with cheerfulness. The executioner had private instructions to employ all possible means to produce a change in her mind, before he proceeded to the last extremity. All his efforts were unavailing : she besought him to perform his office, and to destroy a body which had the misfortune to please any eyes but those of her Redeemer, to whom she was united by the strongest ties of devotion. The executioner, finding all he could

* Prudentii Peristephan., hymn. xiv.

† It is stated, that one among the crowd, in this filthy place of resort, with impure eyes and thought looked upon Agnes, and was immediately stricken with blindness. Prudentius relates, that Agnes being requested to pray unto Christ in behalf of the party stricken, the culprit was restored unto his perfect health and sight ! !

say or do was to no purpose, at last performed the melancholy task with a trembling hand, and amidst the tears of many of the spectators.

In the Sermons of Basil * we meet with an account of Julitta, a Christian lady of Cæsarea, of Cappadocia, who was distinguished for her eminent virtue, masculine courage, and strength of intellect. We learn, from Basil, that she had a troublesome lawsuit with one of the principal men in Cæsarea, who was unjustly possessed of some considerable part of her estate, and had even taken violent hold on her servants and cattle. This oppressive usurper had found means to bribe the Judges in his favour, and to hire persons to swear that the lands and goods in dispute were his property. Julitta, supported by the justice of her cause, thought that she had nothing more to do, but to give the Magistrates a plain and ingenuous statement of her title. When the cause came to be tried, the defendant, instead of supporting his claim, or giving any answer to the plaintiff's plea, urged that the law would not suffer him to engage at that bar with one of a different religion; so that he could not proceed in his defence, unless the lady who was the plaintiff renounced Christianity. The Judge was too well instructed, not to second the motion; and gave it as his opinion, that what he insisted on was according to the laws of the empire. He then ordered an altar to be brought in, and some fire to be put on it, and incense to be prepared; and then told the parties, that if they expected, either of them, to enjoy the benefit of the laws, both of them must forthwith offer incense to the gods. The usurper, who was a Heathen, immediately complied; but Julitta made it appear that her faith was much dearer to her than her goods, or even than life itself. "No," said she, "my affection to what is unquestionably my own shall never hinder me from sacrificing my all, and even my life, if required, rather than violate my fidelity to my God and Saviour." This declaration greatly incensed the Judge; but Julitta proceeded with the same intrepidity, and thanked God for the assurance she had of an eternal inheritance, while that which was her own upon earth was disputed, and unjustly taken from her. The Magistrate made several attempts to induce her to abandon her faith, but without effect: to his suggestions she invariably replied, that she was the servant of Christ, and, as such, she could not listen to his proposals without horror; upon which she was condemned to be burnt. Julitta listened to the sentence with apparent pleasure, and walked to the place of execution with an alacrity which indicated the tranquillity of her soul. Her last moments were spent in exhorting the Christians who were present to prefer the faith of Christ to all human considerations; and she died a glorious example of that faith which she had recommended to others.†

* Basilii Opera, tom. i., Hom. in Martyrem Julittam, p. 314, *et seq.* Fol., Paris, 1638.

† Several women underwent martyrdom at this period; among whom we find Barbara, a noble lady of Tuscany, who, after a miserable and protracted imprisonment, sharp cords, and burning torches applied to her sides, was at length beheaded; Fausta, a virgin; Juliana, a lady of singular excellencies, in Nicomedia; Anysia, a maiden of Thessalonica, who suffered under Maximin; and many others.

One of the most celebrated martyrs of this day was Vincent of Saragossa, in Spain, descended from one of the first families in the province of Tarragona: during comparative infancy, he was placed under the care of Valerius, a Bishop of that city, who instructed him, with considerable diligence, in the articles of the Christian faith, and the duties of piety. The progress which he made in his various studies induced Valerius to ordain him a Deacon; after which, Valerius, who was well acquainted with every branch of his office, and who acquitted himself of every obligation with exemplary fidelity, but being naturally bashful, and having an impediment in his speech, committed the task of preaching to his Deacon, which office he discharged with distinguished success. Toward the close of the year 303, when the persecution of Diocletian reached Spain, Dacian, the Governor of Tarragona, ordered the Christians to be seized, and brought to him at Valentia, laden with irons. Here, for some time, he endeavoured to make them feel the miseries of a prison; hoping that the fatigue of a journey on the one hand, and the hardships they had suffered on the road on the other, would induce them to purchase their liberty at any price. Full of this persuasion, he ordered them to be brought before him; but was surprised to find them strong, healthy, and in full spirits, instead of the emaciated and worn-out creatures which he anticipated to have met: he even imputed blame to the officers and guard who had conducted the prisoners from Saragossa, as if they had showed the culprits more indulgence than what his orders had allowed. Dacian, however, struck with their appearance, made use of very bland and gentle language, to induce them to sacrifice to the pagan deities; and strongly inculcated upon them obedience to the edict of the Emperors, which required that all their subjects, without exception, should adhere to the religion of their ancestors; and also represented to them the danger to which they exposed themselves, by acting in opposition to their Sovereign's order, and by introducing novelties into the exercise of divine worship. Vincent, observing that Valerius made no answer to the President's proposal, which he presumed might proceed from his bashfulness, desired that he might be allowed to speak in behalf of them: this being granted, with the utmost freedom he stated their opinion of the idols of the Heathen, and their fixed resolution to suffer for Christ. The freedom of speech which Vincent assumed was offensive to Dacian, who told him, that he should either burn incense to the gods which he despised, or that he himself, for his contumacy, should fall a sacrifice to their vengeance. This, so far from producing any change in the resolution of Vincentius, led him to repeat what he had aforetime related with even greater warmth, and also to declare that those who were supported by Him whom the Christians adored, were too sensible of the almighty power of that Deity, to acknowledge themselves to be anything but what they really were. The Governor could no longer endure the boldness of this comparatively young man, who, although in chains, conducted himself with the dignity of a Magistrate. He therefore, without hesitation, banished Valerius, and directed his animosity against Vincentius, who was first placed upon the rack, and his limbs stretched and torn with cords, till they were

dislocated and rent asunder. His body, strange to say, was then laid open, and his flesh torn with the *ungulæ:* all these torments he bore with comparative tranquillity; and by his patience, and a smile which rested upon his countenance, he appeared to reproach his adversaries with the weakness and insufficiency of their varied efforts. Dacian, who witnessed this behaviour, in a most violent state of excitement and passion, accused the executioners of negligence in the discharge of their offices; accounting it to them, that the patience of the martyr was so great. He then allowed them some rest, that they might return to their work with renewed vigour; but nothing served to shake the constancy of one who was so firmly united to, and supported by, the Most High. The rage of Dacian appeared as if mitigated by the streams of blood which flowed from all parts of the body of the martyr: he ordered a brief cessation of his torture; and also informed him, that as he was so obstinately bent against sacrificing to the gods, and could not be prevailed upon to approach their altars with reverence, the least return he could make for being released from torment, was to deliver up the books which contained the mysteries of his sect, that those seeds of iniquity might be burnt. Vincentius, who reverenced God in his word, said, that the fire with which he threatened those holy books would be more justly employed in punishing impiety.* Finding that the courage of the martyr was indomitable, the Governor gave way to the most violent transports of fury, and ordered him to be laid upon the iron bed, or gridiron, which was also filled with sharp projecting spikes, and placed over a fire: while one side was broiling, the other was grievously tormented, by the application of red-hot iron bars, and salt thrown into the wounds; and that nothing might be wanting, to show to what extent the cruelty of Paganism could go, or what the fortitude of a martyr, when supported by the grace and strength of the Almighty, could endure, he remained unmoved, with his eyes fixed on heaven, where his heart had long been. Dacian, hearing of this last trial, and utterly despairing of successfully vindicating the honour of his idols, was resolved to remove such an obnoxious person as he from the public gaze. This,

* In many of these narratives the language put into the mouths of the martyrs is not always to be justified on Christian principles. Nor should the degree of provocation received by them be admitted as an excuse; for they are represented as perfectly unmoved, capable of arguing with precision, and annoying their tormentors with well-directed sarcasm. Unsuitably enough, occurs the following passage in the Acts of Boniface:—"The holy martyr said to him, 'Be dumb, wretch! and open not thy mouth against my Lord Jesus Christ. O serpent of darkest mind, ancient of evil days, a curse upon thee!'" In the second hymn of the Peristephanon, Vincentius is made to remind Dacian of the fate of Sodom and Gomorrha, and to assure him of the certainty of his obtaining the same sulphureous portion in the lowest hell:—

"Vides favillas indices
Gomorreorum criminum;
Sodomita nec latet cinis,
Testis perennis funeris.
Exemplar hoc, Serpens, tuum est,
Fuligo quem nox sulphuris
Bitumen et mixtum pice
Imo implicabunt Tartaro."

(Maitland, Church in the Catacombs, p. 99.)

he imagined, would be most effectually accomplished by enclosing the martyr in a dark dungeon, with his lower extremities extended in the stocks; and also ordered the ground whereon he lay to be covered with sharp flints and broken glass, and to leave him in those circumstances without food; and finally to inform him when he expired. In this project Dacian had to meet with disappointment: though excluded from the light of the natural sun, the Sun of Righteousness illumed his heart; so that when the keepers visited the prison, they invariably found him singing the praises of the Most High; and the wounds which he had received were healed: this so astounded the spectators, as to cause them to abandon Heathenism, and to embrace the religion of the Saviour. By the order of Dacian, Vincentius was now laid on a soft bed, in order that, being well refreshed, he might be enabled to endure torments even more severe and dreadful. All his sufferings were now happily at an end, and the crown was ready. Shortly after he was laid upon the bed, he surrendered his soul into the hands of his Redeemer with great tranquillity.

Anthimus, Bishop of Nicomedia, appears to have been among the first who suffered; but his martyrdom was followed by a great number. Many were burnt to death, and others drowned. Eusebius speaks of the prisons being so full of victims, that there was no room for ordinary criminals. The latter was himself a spectator of numerous atrocities in his own city of Cæsarea, in Palestine. That province was then under the government of Flavianus; and the first edict arrived a little time previous to Easter. The Clergy of the neighbouring churches were brought to be tortured, and the barbarous work was carried onward to a frightful extent. There were some whose courage failed them, and who consented to sacrifice; but many had their lives spared; because, when they were senseless from pain, or when their hands were powerless on account of the rack, they were compelled to go through some act of sacrificing which satisfied the Magistrate.* We cannot fully depend upon these details; and although reports were circulated, in the following century, that Marcellinus, the Bishop, had been seen to offer incense in a temple, there is good reason to think that the whole was a calumny.† He is said, by one writer, to have acquired great glory by his conduct during the persecution.‡ Before the close of the year 303, Diocletian and his son-in-

* "Some, indeed, from excessive dread, broken down and overpowered by their terrors, sank, and gave way immediately at the first onset; but each of the rest experienced various kinds of torture. Some were scourged with innumerable strokes of the lash; others racked in their limbs, and galled in their sides with torturing instruments; some with intolerable fetters, by which the joints of their hands were dislocated. Nevertheless, they bore this, as regulated by the secret determinations of God. One was seized by the hands, and led to the altar by others who were thrusting the polluted and unhallowed victim into his right hand, and then suffered to go again, as if he had sacrificed. Another, though he had not even touched, when others said that he had sacrificed, went away in silence. Another was taken up half dead, and was released from his bonds, and ranked among the sacrificers. Another crying out, and asserting that he did not assent to these things, was struck on the mouth, and silenced by the blows of many who were suborned for that purpose: he was thrust away violently, although he had never sacrificed." (Euseb., De Mart. Palest., cap. 1.)

† Baronii Annales, A.D. 302, § lxxxviii. The Acts of the Council of Sinuessa, in which Marcellinus is said to have been condemned, are confessedly spurious.

‡ Theodoret., Hist. Eccles., lib. i., cap 3.

law left Nicomedia, previous to which another severe edict was issued against the church. The twentieth anniversary of his succession to the throne was celebrated in December. Galerius kept it at Antioch. Being now left to himself, he would be sure to execute his own orders with the greatest severity. The Bishop of Antioch at this period was Tyrannus, who had succeeded Cyril in 299; but we do not read of any personal suffering that he underwent. At the same time, Diocletian was celebrating his Vicennalia at Rome; and the usual splendour of such occasions was increased by his having a triumph, together with Herculeus, for victories gained in Persia and Africa. The presence of the two Emperors, and this succession of public shows, were, as usual, likely to be productive of evil to the Christians; but there was something in Diocletian's reception at Rome that displeased him. If these festivities had been given with a view to conciliate his subjects in the capital, they totally failed; and he was so disgusted with them, that he set out, in the depth of the winter, for Ravenna, though his bad health made this journey particularly unpleasant. In the summer of 304 he found himself once more in his favourite residence of Nicomedia, but with his constitution entirely broken, and in a state of great danger.* Herculeus probably continued at Rome during the whole of the year 304. In the month of October, Marcellinus, Bishop of Rome, died; and some accounts say that he was martyred. There is also reason to believe that the see continued vacant for more than three years, which might seem to point out a season of more than usual danger. This, however, was not the case; and some other cause must have operated, beside persecution, which delayed the election of the Bishop. The names of other martyrs are mentioned, who suffered at Rome: on the whole, however, we may conclude, that the Christians in the capital were exposed to much less suffering than in other parts of the empire.†

Egypt suffered severely during this persecution. The see of Alexandria was now filled by Peter, who had previously been teacher in the catechetical school, and succeeded Theonas in the bishopric in the year 300, three years before the persecution began. He had been a sufferer with Dionysius fifty years before, in the Decian persecution; and his great age, we find, did not preserve him from severer trials. The whole of Africa being under the government of Herculeus, the edicts were executed with the same severity in that country as in Egypt. Anulinus was the Proconsul; and the names of several are recorded whom he put to death. Particular pains seem to have been taken in Africa to compel the Christians to give up their books. Mensurius, who had been raised to the see of Carthage, after Lucianus, the successor of Cyprian, was accused of having given up the books belonging to his church; but he proved, satisfactorily, that he had deceived the inquisitors, by giving them some heretical works. This persecution raged violently in Palestine: this fact Eusebius, without hesitation, asserts; and that he himself was well acquainted

* Burton, Lect. on Eccles. Hist., lect. xxix.; Lactantius, De Mort. Persecut., cap. xvii.

† Baronii Annales, A.D. 304, § xxiv.

with several in that country. He mentions, says John Foxe, "a marvellous martyrdom at Tyre, where certain Christians, being given to most cruel wild beasts, were preserved, without being hurt by them, to the great astonishment of the beholders; and those bears, boars, leopards, and bulls, kept hungry for that purpose, and stimulated with hot irons, had no desire to devour them; which, notwithstanding, most vehemently raged against those by whom they were brought on the stage; who, standing, as they thought, out of the reach of danger, were first devoured; but the Christian martyrs, because they could not be hurt of the beasts, being slain with the sword, were afterwards thrown into the sea.* At that time was martyred the Bishop of Tyre, whose name was Tyrannus, who was thrown to the fish, at Antioch; and Zenobius, a Presbyter of Sidon, and a skilful Physician, who died amidst numerous tortures in that place. Sylvanus, Bishop of Emisa, a notable martyr, together with certain others, was thrown to the wild beasts in that city. Sylvanus, a Bishop of Gaza, was slain, with thirty-nine others, at the copper-mines of Phæno. At Cæsarea, Pamphilus, a Presbyter, the glory of that church, died a most worthy martyr, whose Life Eusebius hath written, in a book by itself, and whose commendable martyrdom he hath declared in another treatise.† Furthermore, he maketh mention of others at Antioch, who were broiled on gridirons set over the fire, —yet not to death, but in order to protract their sufferings; of others that were brought to the altars, and commanded to offer incense, who would rather thrust their right hand into the fire, than touch the profane or wicked sacrifice."

Among several whose names have been specially recorded, we find Chrysogonus, a worthy and exemplary Christian, and who was tutor to Anastasia, of whom he had care from her infancy, and brought her up in the fear of God, and in the principles of the Christian religion. He continued to have the oversight of his pupil until her father, who was a Pagan, compelled her to marry a Heathen. That engagement, and the persecution which now raged, obliged him to resign his charge: he was forthwith seized and imprisoned for the truth, where he continued some time; and during his confinement he wrote to Anastasia, to comfort her in her affliction, and also to confirm her in the "good and right way." Diocletian, being at Aquileia, sent an order to the Prefect of Rome, where Chrysogonus was confined, to send him and other prisoners to himself for trial. The martyr, having arrived at Aquileia, and being brought before the Emperor, after numerous promises, and threatened torments, to induce him to apostatize from the faith, was condemned to lose his head. Anastasia, the pupil of Chrysogonus, was descended from an illustrious family of Rome, and educated in the Christian faith by her mother Flavia, a woman of great virtue and piety. But that excellent lady dying while Anastasia was but young, she was placed in the hands of Chrysogonus, who completed what her mother had so auspiciously commenced, and strengthened the foundation which she had laid. Pretextatus, her father,

* Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. vii., cap. 15.

† Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. viii., cap. 13, De Mart. Palest., cap. xi.

who was a stranger to the name of Christ, obliged her to marry one Publius, who had nothing but his birth to recommend him, and was guilty of the most criminal extravagancies. That unhappy debauchee wasted the greater part of her fortune in riotous living; and in order to secure to himself that part of it which she had appropriated to charitable purposes, he placed her under a guard, and confined her as an enemy to the religion of her country. He deprived her, also, of the comforts of life, and allowed her to receive no visits, especially from such as he apprehended might confirm her in her resolution of suffering. Chrysogonus was now in prison. Anastasia had not only to endure the mortification of being separated from her spiritual guide, but also to hear of the hardships which he was called to endure. She found means to convey to him a letter, and desired the assistance of his prayers for her deliverance. He exhorted her to the exercise of patience, in the prospect of a calm, which, ere long, would follow the storm. The severe treatment was considerably increased: she wrote to her tutor a second time, acquainting him that she could expect no other relief but that which death would bring, and in a very earnest manner commended herself to his prayers. Chrysogonus had been informed of the particulars of her case from the woman who brought the communication from Anastasia, and employed the same individual to exhort her to perseverance, and to inform her from him, that she, as well as himself, was on the road to that glory which invariably attends martyrdom. Publius, the husband of the lady, died soon after while travelling in the East. This circumstance gave her liberty, and the personal disposal of the rest of her fortune, which she cheerfully employed in relieving the indigent, in comforting the sick, and in supplying the wants of those who were suffering for the faith. We are told that when Chrysogonus went to Aquileia to take his trial, she followed him to that city, and after his death devoted a considerable portion of her time in visiting the Christians who were under confinement, which so provoked the Emperors, that they placed her in the hands of Florus, the Governor of Illyricum, who endeavoured to shake her constancy in the faith by a variety of barbarous and unheard-of torments; and afterwards, finding her to be invincible, he ordered her to be burnt alive, which sentence was immediately put into execution.

The city of Gaza produced many illustrious martyrs of both sexes, during the persecution of Diocletian; which was continued by Galerius and Herculeus; some of whom suffered on the spot; others were sent to Cæsarea, the metropolis of Palestine, the usual residence of the Governor of that province. None were more conspicuous among the former, than two holy women, Meuris and Thea, who bore with great fortitude the cruelty of man, and the malice of the devil; and ultimately triumphed over both. We are but little acquainted with the transactions of their lives and sufferings, only that the former died under the hands of her tormentors; and the latter, after having courageously passed through a variety of tortures, languished for some time in prison, where she ultimately expired. Foxe also testifies, and his authority is Nicephorus, that Eulampia and Eulampius, of Nicome-

dia, Agape, Irene, Chionia of Thessalonica, suffered about this time. He mentions also a matter full of horror and grief. There were assembled together in the temple many Christian men to celebrate the memory of the nativity of Christ. Herculeus, judging this a fit opportunity of exercising his cruelty towards the Christians, sent a company thither with orders to burn the temple. The doors being shut and closed round about, they came with fire, and commanded the herald to announce with a loud voice, that whosoever would have life, should come out of the temple, and offer sacrifice on the nearest altar to Jupiter; and upon their refusing so to do, they should all be burnt with the building. Then an individual answered in the name of the rest, with great courage and much boldness, that they were all Christians, and believed that Christ was their only God and King, and that they would offer sacrifice to him, with the Father and the Holy Ghost; and that they were now all ready to offer unto him. With these words the fire was kindled, which surrounded the temple; and of men, women, and children that suffered, many thousands have been enumerated.*

It was about this time that Sabinus, Bishop of Assisium, was called to suffer for the sake of Christ; especially when the Romans animated by the sanguinary edicts of Diocletian and Herculeus clamoured loudly for what they termed justice on the Christians, and openly advocated the extirpation of that odious sect at every time and in every place. The Senate forthwith, willing to gratify the public, and also to oblige the Emperors, published an order for placing all persons whom they discovered professing Christianity, in the hands of the Governors of the respective towns, or the Judges of particular places, who were thereby authorized and required to compel them to renounce the Christian religion, and to sacrifice at the altars of Paganism. History also informs us, that, pursuant to this order, Herculeus sent a rescript to the Governor of Tuscany, directing the confiscation of goods, and inflicting corporal chastisement on such as should refuse or neglect to execute it. By virtue of this order, Sabinus and his two Deacons, Marcellus and Exuperantius, with several other Ecclesiastics, were seized at Assisium in the month of May following, and thrown into prison by order of Venustianus, Governor of Tuscany and Umbria. Here they continued until that Magistrate arrived in the town; when Sabinus, being carried before him, was required to offer incense to the gods. The Bishop returned an answer suitable to the occasion; and on being farther importuned, expressed his utter abhorrence of the act, and thrust the idol from him. Venustianus, being incensed at this boldness, which he considered to be an act of unparalleled impiety, ordered his hands to be struck off. Marcellus and Exuperantius, who were of the same opinion as the Bishop, were placed upon the rack, and for some time were beaten most unmercifully. Finding them proof against these blows, the Governor directed their bodies to be torn with hooks, till they expired under this cruel treatment. Sabinus was doomed to a slower martyrdom, and was confined several months in prison, without

* Nicephori Callisti, Eccles. Hist., lib. vii., cap. 6, fol., p. 446. Paris, 1630.

any relief, except what he occasionally received from a Christian widow, whose grandson had recovered his sight through the blessing of God upon his prayers. This fact coming to the knowledge of Venustianus, who was himself troubled with a complaint in his eyes, he was startled, and immediately sent for the Bishop, to whom he said, that he had now sentiments very different from those which he had formerly entertained, both of himself and the religion which he professed. He then threw himself at the Bishop's feet, and craved his assistance in the cure of both body and soul. The fervency of his petitions, and the sincerity of his intentions, were answered, and, after due and proper instruction, the Governor received baptism. His own conversion was followed by that of his household, to the number of fourteen or fifteen persons, who did not fail to behold the invisible power of Almighty God in the Governor's favour. When Herculeus heard of the conversion of his officer, he sent Lucius, one of his principal dependants, to Assisium, with an order to behead Venustianus and the whole of his family.

We shall now direct attention to the martyrdom of Januarius and his companions. The former was Bishop of Beneventum in the kingdom of Naples. In the reign of Diocletian and Herculeus, he was remarkable for his friendship with Sosius, a Deacon of Misene, near Puzzuolo. The Deacon's reputation for wisdom and sanctity engaged Januarius to make to him frequent visits, which he endeavoured to improve to his own advantage, and that of the people committed to his care; and nothing but the violence of persecution could interrupt their pious conversation. Pursuant to the several edicts for seizing the Christians, Sosius was carried before Draconius the Governor of Campania, who, after the usual interrogatories and answers, insisted on his owning the pagan idols for his gods. When it appeared that promises and threats were too innocuous to move him, he was stretched on the rack and cruelly scourged. The Governor, finding him steadfast, commanded him to be cast into prison at Puzzuolo, where he was visited by the faithful of that town; and, among the rest, by Proculus a Deacon, Eutyches and Acutius, two laymen; nor was he forgotten by his friend Januarius, who saw him frequently, and encouraged him in his resolutions. These friends of the oppressed did not long pass unobserved; consequently this office of humanity and Christian friendship which they discharged was represented to the individuals in authority, as a high offence, and a great insult to the imperial orders. On this information the accused were taken before Draconius, and, after several measures were resorted to, to induce compliance with the imperial mandate, they were committed to the dungeons of the same prison as Sosius. Timotheus succeeded Draco in the Governorship of Campania. On arriving at Nola he received information respecting certain professors of the Christian religion, and was also told that one of that number, from Beneventum, made a common practice of visiting and assisting the Christians whom Draconius had thrown into prison at Puzzuolo, for their adherence to the faith. Whereupon the Bishop Januarius, who was the individual alluded to, was immediately seized, put to the torture, and committed

to prison. The faithful at Beneventum, alarmed at the incarceration of their Bishop, deputed Festus, a Deacon, and Desiderius, a Reader, to visit him in their name, and to make all necessary provision for his comfort and relief. On arriving at Nola, where the Bishop was imprisoned, they were seized, and taken before Timotheus, who proposed several questions, to which they replied with all simplicity and fidelity. Upon the confession which they severally made, they were laden with irons, and compelled to walk before the Governor's chariot to Puzzuolo; and then they were immured in the same prison as Sosius, and the next day were brought out for execution. They were condemned to be devoured by wild beasts in the amphitheatre, but none of those savage animals were inclined to molest them. The whole assembly were amazed at this: the Christians attributed the whole to the interposition of Heaven in favour of the sufferers; the Heathen imputed it to the influence of magic. They were subsequently ordered to be beheaded; which sentence being executed, their remains were taken up and buried by the Christians.*

Of the birth-place or parents of the martyr Dorothy, or what education she received, we have little or no account; only that Fabricius, being Governor of Cappadocia, endeavoured to compel her to worship the pagan deities; and, finding that he could not prevail, he exposed her to several severe and violent kinds of torture. Before he delivered her up to the executioners, he placed her under the direction and care of Chrysta and Callista, two unhappy women who had apostatized from the faith. They endeavoured to persuade her to follow their example, and to save her life. In this bad work they exercised all their skill, but in vain; and, instead of succeeding with her, were so affected with her behaviour, that they returned to the church, and actually died in behalf of that faith which they had formally renounced. Dorothy was obliged to be present at their execution, in the hope that the prospect of arriving at the same termination might intimidate and deter her from the same profession. But the Most High, who ever designed the blood of the martyrs to be the seed of the church, defeated the object of the enemy, inspired this female martyr with fresh courage, and enabled her with patience to endure all the

* No martyr of any age has had honour thrust upon him, equal to that of Januarius. The city of Naples obtained possession of his relics. During the wars of the Normans, they were removed, first to Benevento, and, some time after, to the abbey of Monte Vergine; but in 1497 they were brought back to Naples, which city has long honoured him as principal patron. Among many miraculous deliverances which it ascribes to the intercession of this saint, none is looked upon as more remarkable than its preservation from the fiery eruptions of Mount Vesuvius, which is only eight miles distant, and which has often threatened the entire destruction of this city, both by the prodigious quantities of burning sand, ashes, and stones, which it throws up on those occasions to a much greater distance than Naples; and by a torrent of burning sulphur, nitre, calcined stones, and other materials, which like a liquid fire has sometimes gushed from that volcano, and, digging itself a channel, (which has frequently been two or three miles broad,) rolled its flaming stream through the valley into the sea, destroying towns and villages in its way, and often passing near Naples. Some of these eruptions, which in the fifth and seventh centuries threatened this city with destruction, by the cloud of ashes which they raised, are said to have darkened the sky as far as Constantinople, and struck terror into the inhabitants of that capital. The intercession of Januarius is foolishly said to have saved the city. I refer, for a full account of the miracles of this martyr, to my edition of Elliott's Delineation of Romanism, p. 538, *et seq.*

torture of the rack, until the Governor, discovering that she was resolved not to abandon her Saviour and her faith, commanded her to be beheaded. About this time also, according to our most credible authorities, Pancratius suffered, commonly called Pancras. He was a native of Phrygia, but came to Rome with an uncle, when only fourteen years of age: his parents being dead, he was left in the care of this relative, who caused him to be instructed in the principles of Christianity, and to be baptized. His tutor died before the promulgation of the edicts of Diocletian; nevertheless, the grace of God supported his pupil under very severe trials, and brought him off victorious. He was beheaded. Four Christians, officers in the army of Rome, won the crown of martyrdom: their names were Basilides, Cyrinus, Nabor, and Nazarius, who had with boldness declared the truth as it is in Jesus, in that city. Aurelius the Prefect sent for them, and urged them to renounce the faith, and sacrifice to the gods of Heathenism; but finding them resolved, he committed them to prison, where they continued until they were brought before the Emperor. When they appeared before him, it was proved that they had not only disobeyed the edict themselves, but they had also been instrumental in the conversion of Marcellus their jailer, and several others, during their confinement. The Emperor was incensed at this account, and ordered them to be beaten with wire rods, and remanded to prison. After a few days they were again brought into court, and again solicited to offer incense to the gods; and upon their refusing, they were sentenced to be beheaded. Nicander and Marcian were also soldiers in the army of Rome, where they had served some time before it pleased Almighty God to enlighten their minds, and to give them to see the vanity and deceitfulness of the world. When converted to Christianity, they quitted the army, renounced all hope of preferment, and heartily engaged in the spiritual warfare. This change could not long remain a secret; inasmuch as it opposed the existing authorities, which had from time to time issued several edicts prohibiting the profession of the Christian faith: they were speedily accused of disobedience to the Emperor, of gross impiety towards the gods of the country, and carried before Maximus, the Governor of Illyricum, at Mœsia. That civic officer immediately ordered the imperial edict which obliged all persons to sacrifice to the national deities, to be read, and these two soldiers immediately to comply with its provisions. Nicander urged, that the laws of his religion forbade such compliance. To this Maximus replied, that he would make the affair as easy to themselves as possible, and would not insist on any great and solemn offering, but would be satisfied with his throwing a little incense into the fire in honour of the gods. "No," said Nicander, "a Christian cannot adore stocks and stones, without committing an injury to the Immortal Jehovah, who made the world out of nothing;—who is the only true object of worship, and who will save all that put their trust in him." Maximus then asked them, why they would take such a rash step, and deprive themselves of the favour and reward of the Emperors, which were due to their rank and merit. Nicander replied, "that their reason for declining these favours was, because there

existed unhappily a close connexion between them, and such actions as must leave an indelible stain upon their souls." This noble soldier was married to one Daria, a Christian woman of singular piety, who, hearing that her husband was before the Governor, and upon his trial, forthwith went to that court, and, advancing to the side of her husband, exhorted him to constancy and perseverance in the faith. Maximus, observing this, turned towards her, and told her that she was a wicked woman to desire her husband's death! To this cruel insinuation she replied, that her object was to procure for him a better and an eternal inheritance. The Governor repeated his charge, and told her, that it was impossible that she could have any other object in view, than procuring for herself another husband when she had obtained emancipation from the present one. "If," said Daria, "you can entertain such a thought with regard to me, put it in my power to undeceive you, and despatch me the first." To which Maximus replied, that he knew not how far he might go in that case, but would immediately send her to prison. Daria being removed to the place of confinement, the Governor addressed himself to Nicander, advising him not to heed what his wife had said, and to provide for his own safety in the way which he proposed; and that he had allowed him time to make his choice. Nicander replied, "I have already considered this affair, and am resolved, and have no other thought or desire than, to save myself." Maximus, supposing that he spoke of his temporal life, was pleased with the conquest which he supposed he had achieved, and ordered the altar and the incense to be prepared for sacrificing. Upon this Nicander, raising his voice, repeated with some degree of vehemence, what he had previously stated, and prayed to be preserved from the temptation that was prepared for him. Maximus now fully comprehended his meaning, and told him that he was surprised at his sudden change: "I apprehended," said he, "that you were desirous to live; but now I perceive that you make death your choice." "The life that I ask," said Nicander, "is that of eternity, and not the life of this world, which at best is but of short duration." Marcian was next examined, who assured the Governor that he was of the same sentiments with his friend, and could only repeat what he had before said; upon which he was informed that he should suffer the same fate. They were both conveyed to prison, where after lying several weeks, they were again brought up for another hearing. Maximus now observed, that they had had time enough to consider what to do; and asked whether they were disposed to give the usual proof of obedience to the imperial authority. Both repeated their former profession, and declared that they could not think of renouncing the faith. They manifested full confidence in that omnipotent power whom they adored, and desired that they might be put in the way in which Christ required them to walk. The Governor then assured them they should not be disappointed at death, inasmuch as they desired it so eagerly. Marcian then conjured him by the life of their Imperial Majesties, to grant their wish without further delay; and endeavoured at the same time to inform him, that his request did not proceed from any impatience under

their sufferings, or apprehension of what he could inflict, but from an ardent desire to depart and be with Christ. This prayer was urged with so much warmth, that the Governor immediately sentenced them to lose their heads; for which the martyrs returned thanks to the Most High, from whom they expected the crown; and to the Judge, who contributed to their glory, for condemning them. But a few minutes only passed between the time of pronouncing the sentence and the execution, to which they went with great cheerfulness, which the prospect of approaching happiness only could inspire. They were accompanied by crowds of their friends and relatives, whose sentiments on the occasion were as diverse as their religious creeds. Marcian's wife was among the number; but her behaviour was very different from that of Daria, who, having been set at liberty, was resolved to have the happiness of witnessing Nicander finish his course gloriously; while the other unhappy woman reproached her husband Marcian, for neglecting the means offered for saving his life; she conjured him to have some compassion for her and her child; telling him that it was yet in his power to avert the stroke of death. Marcian, however, was immovable: he assured her that Satan had blinded her; he commanded her to leave him, and not attempt to prevent him completing his martyrdom. He was proceeding in this strain, when Zoticus, a Christian, took him by the hand, bade him take courage, applauded his resolution, and congratulated him on the glory he was about to enjoy. Marcian's wife still followed him, crying, and teazing him to renounce the faith, which compelled him to request Zoticus to keep her at some distance from him. When the martyrs arrived at the place of execution, Marcian desired that his wife might be brought unto him: he embraced her with all possible tenderness, and then conjured her in the name of God to retire from a sight which she could not bear. He then embraced his child, and, lifting up his eyes toward heaven, recommended him to the divine protection. After this the two martyrs were allowed to embrace each other, and then parted to make the last preparations, and to finish the combat. As Marcian was looking round upon the spectators, he beheld Daria, who was endeavouring to reach the scaffold: he desired that she might be brought forward, and conducted to Nicander. That admirable woman stood by her husband, and encouraged him to the last moment. "I had the misfortune," said she, "to live ten years without seeing you, during which time I made it my constant prayer to enjoy that satisfaction once more. My request has been granted; and I am now much happier than I expected, by being the wife of a martyr. Go on then, as you have begun, and deprive me not of that honour; and, if you would add anything to my happiness, let it be your prayers and wishes, that I may follow in the same path to glory." These martyrs remained constant to the last, and died praising the Most High.

At the distance of so many ages it is impossible to discover by whom Christianity was first preached in the islands of Great Britain. Some writers have ascribed that province to Peter, others have preferred the rival claim of Paul; but both opinions, improbable as they

are in themselves, rest on the most slender evidence,—on testimonies which are many of them irrelevant, all ambiguous and unsatisfactory. It is, however, certain that at a very early period there were Christians in Britain; nor is it difficult to account for the circumstance from the intercourse which had long subsisted between the island and Rome. Within a very few years from the ascension of Christ the church of Rome had attained great celebrity: soon afterwards it attracted the notice, and was honoured with the enmity, of Claudius and Nero.* Of the Romans whom at that period choice or necessity conducted to Britain, and of the Britons who were induced to visit Rome, some would, of course, become acquainted with the professors of the Gospel, and yield to the exertions of their zeal. Both Pomponia Græcina, the wife of the Proconsul Plautius, the first who made any permanent conquest in the island, and Claudia, a British lady,† who had married the Senator Pudens, are, on very probable grounds, believed to have been Christians. But whether it was owing to the piety of these or of other individuals‡ that the doctrine of Christianity was first introduced among the Britons, it appears to have made proselytes, and to have proceeded with a silent but steady pace towards the extremity of the island. The attention of the Roman officers was absorbed in the civil and military duties of their stations; and while the blood of the Christians flowed in the other provinces of the empire, the Britons were suffered to practise the new religion without molestation. There is even evidence that the knowledge of the Gospel was not confined to the subjects of Rome. Before the close of the second century, it had penetrated among the independent tribes of the north.

It might have been expected that the British writers would have preserved the memory of an event so important in their eyes as the conversion of their fathers. But their traditions have been so embellished and disfigured by fiction, that without collateral evidence it is hardly possible to distinguish in them what is real from that which is imaginary. After deducting from the account of Nennius and his brethren every improbable circumstance, we may believe that the authority conferred by the Emperor Claudius on Cogidunus was continued in his family; that Lucius, (Lever Maur, or "the great light,") one of his near descendants, was a believer in the Gospel; that

* Sueton. in Claud. xxv.; Taciti Annales, lib. xv., cap. 44.

† Pomponia Græcina was a woman of illustrious birth, and the wife of Plautius, who, in the reign of Claudius, made the first descent on Britain, and on his return from that country entered the city with the pomp of an ovation. Pomponia was accused of embracing the rites of a foreign superstition. The matter was referred to the jurisdiction of her husband. Plautius, in conformity with an ancient usage, called together a number of her relations, and in her presence sat in judgment on the conduct of his wife. He pronounced her innocent. She lived to a great age in one continued train of affliction. With regard to Claudia, compare 2 Tim. iv. 21, with Martial, Epig., lib. ii., cap. 54; lib. iv., cap. 13.

‡ Nothing can be less probable in itself, nor less supported by ancient testimony, than the opinion that Britain was converted by oriental Missionaries. The only foundation on which it rests, is, that in the seventh century the Britons did not keep Easter on the same day as the Church of Rome. That, however, they did so in the beginning of the fourth century, is plain from Eusebius, (Vit. Constantin., lib. iii. cap. 19,) Socrates, (Hist., lib. v., cap. 22,) and the Council of Arles. (Spelman, pp. 40–42.)

he sent to Rome Fagan and Dervan, to be more perfectly instructed in the Christian faith; and that these envoys, having received ordination from Pope Evaristus or Eleutherius, at their return, under the influence of their patron, increased the number of the proselytes by their preaching, and established the British, after the model of the continental, churches. But independently of their authority, we have undoubted proof that the believers were numerous, and that a regular hierarchy had been instituted, before the close of the third century. For by contemporary writers, the church of Britain is always put on an equality with the churches of Spain and Gaul; and in one of the most early of the western Councils, that of Arles in A.D. 314, we meet with the names of three British Bishops; of Eborius of York, for the province of Maxima; of Restitutus of London, for that of Flavia; and of Adelphius of Richborough, for that of Britannia Prima.

Origen puts this question, in his fourth homily upon Ezekiel: "When," says he, "did ever the country of Britain own the unity of the Godhead before the coming of the Saviour?" And in his sixth homily upon the first of St. Luke, he tells us that the "influence of the Gospel, and the power of our Saviour's kingdom, reached as far as Britain, which seemed to lie in another division of the world." And Tertullian, who lived before Origen, in his list of the converted nations, mentions "the different clans of the Moors, the provinces of Spain, from one end to the other, the country of the Gauls, and that in Britain the Gospel had made its way through places impregnable to the Roman arms." And a little after he adds, "The Germans are not suffered to pass their bounds; the Britons are as it were imprisoned by the ocean; the Moors are kept within compass, and blocked up with the Roman legions; nay, the victorious empire itself is not without its limits and *non ultra;* but the dominions of our Saviour have no frontiers to confine them; his authority is owned in every climate, and his majesty adored by all the nations above mentioned." To the testimonies of Origen and Tertullian, we may add those of Gildas and Bede, the one a Briton, the other a Saxon, and both of them natives of this island. Gildas, who lived in the middle of the sixth century, informs us, that Christianity continued here to the Diocletian persecution; and Bede affirms the same thing, adding withal, that the Britons were constant to their profession, and maintained the faith without apostacy or any heretical corruption.

"Before I proceed," says Collier,* "upon this persecution, I shall run through the interval in a word or two; and just touch upon the British affairs with reference to the Romish empire. Severus, having defeated his rivals, and grown absolute in the empire, was at leisure to attend the business of this island, from whence he had lately received intelligence by Verius Lupus, that the northern Britons had broke into the Roman province, and harassed the country; and that there was need of a reinforcement to deal with them. The Emperor Severus, being an ambitious prince, was glad of the news, in hopes of a triumph. To this purpose he goes in person in the expedition.

* Eccles. Hist. of Great Britain. By Jeremy Collier. 8vo., vol. i., p. 45.

The enemy, being discouraged with the formidableness of their preparations, sent an embassy to excuse what they had done, and beg a peace. But the Emperor, being unwilling to lose the opportunity of a victory, threw in delays, and drew out the treaty in length; and, when his troops were ready to march, he dismissed the ambassadors without concluding upon any articles."

The dreadful persecution under Diocletian extended to Britain, which had a large share in the calamity. But when Diocletian and Herculeus resigned the empire, and Constantius was declared Augustus, the persecution ceased in Britain and other places of the West;* where, Eusebius affirms, it did not last two years, though it continued ten in the East. But though the persecution was comparatively short, it went to the extremity of punishment, and took away the lives of several Christians.

The historian Gildas gives but a very gloomy description of the trials through which the Christians at this period had to pass. "The rays of light were received with lukewarm minds by the inhabitants; but they nevertheless took root among some of them in a greater or less degree, until the nine years' persecution of the tyrant Diocletian, when the churches throughout the whole world were overthrown, all the copies of the holy Scriptures which could be found burned in the streets, and the chosen Pastors of God's flock butchered together with their innocent sheep, in order that not a vestige, if possible, might remain in some provinces of Christ's religion. What disgraceful flights then took place; what slaughter and death inflicted by way of punishment in divers shapes; what dreadful apostacies from religion; and, on the contrary, what glorious crowns of martyrdom then were won; what raving fury was displayed by the persecutors, and patience on the part of the suffering saints;—ecclesiastical history informs us; for the whole church were crowding in a body, to leave behind them the dark things of this world, and to make the best of their way to the happy mansions of heaven, as if to their proper home."† "God, therefore," says Gildas, "who wishes all men to be saved, and who calls sinners no less than those who think themselves righteous, magnified his mercy towards us; and as we know, during the above-named persecution, that Britain might not totally be enveloped in the dark shades of night, he, of his own free gift, kindled up among us bright luminaries of holy martyrs, whose places of burial and of martyrdom, had they not for our manifold crimes been interfered with and destroyed by the barbarians, would have still kindled, in the minds of the beholders, no small fire of divine charity. Such were Alban of Verulam, Aaron and Julius, citizens of Carlisle, and the rest of both sexes who in different places stood their ground in the Christian conflict."‡

* Euseb., de Martyr. Palest., cap. xiii.

† Works of Gildas, surnamed "Sapiens," or the Wise. Sect. 9. Giles's Edit. 12mo. Bohn, 1848.

‡ Works of Gildas, sect. 10. He was surnamed the Wise, a British Monk, and the most ancient writer of this country extant; was born 511, according to Leland, but others say in 493. He was a disciple of Iltutus, Abbot of Morgan, and became a Monk of Bangor. He is said to have visited Ireland; and, after his return, he appears to have

Among the British martyrs, Alban ranks not only the first, but he is confessedly the most eminent. He is said to have been a person of noble extraction, and to have lived near the town of Verulam, which possessed the several privileges of a Roman colony. It stood near the site of the present town of St. Alban's, and was cruelly sacked by the Britons, under Boadicea, when Suetonius Paulinus was the General and Governor of the island under Nero. It was about the year 304 the persecution reached this country. Alban, though a Pagan, was of a generous and hospitable temper, and had entertained under his roof a Christian Clergyman, who had absconded on account of the persecution, whom Alban observed to be continually engaged in prayer both night and day, when suddenly divine light shone upon his host, who began to imitate the example of faith and piety which was before him; and, being leisurely instructed by the wanderer in the path of truth and righteousness, he cast aside the darkness of idolatry, and became a Christian in all sincerity of heart. It was not long before the news of a fugitive Christian having been entertained in the house of Alban was spread, and soldiers were sent to make diligent search. When they arrived at the martyr's residence, Alban immediately presented himself to the soldiers, instead of his guest, in the habit or long coat which it was customary for the sacerdotal order to wear; and in this garb he was conducted into the presence of the Judge, who happened at the time when Alban was conducted before him to be standing by the altars, and offering sacrifice to the pretended deities. The appearance of this saint put him into a complete fury; and being enraged that Alban should presume to harbour a Christian, and expose himself to the danger consequent on such a line of conduct, he ordered him to be dragged to the statues of the idols, and menaced as follows:—"Because," said he, "you have had the assurance to conceal a sacrilegious person,* and one that has

spent some time in the northern parts of Britain. According to some writers, he visited France and Italy, when he returned to his native country, and acquired a high reputation as a Preacher. In 581, he wrote his Epistola de Excidio Britanniæ, et Castigatione Ordinis Ecclesiastici. Archbishop Ussher refers this Epistle to the year 564; but Cave, on the authority of Ralph de Dicetus, Polydore Virgil, Bale, &c., gives it the later date. It was first printed by Polydore Virgil, in 1525, 8vo., from an imperfect and corrupt copy, which edition was followed in the eighth volume of the Biblioth. Patrum. It was afterwards published in 1568, by John Josseline, from another corrupt MS. An edition of it was published by Dr. Thomas Gale, from a more ancient and perfect MS. than either of the preceding in 1691, in the first volume of his Historiæ Britannicæ Saxonicæ, &c. Gildas also wrote several letters, of which there are numerous fragments in an old collection of canons preserved among the MSS. in the Cotton library. Some say he died at the abbey of Glastonbury in 570: according to others, he died at the abbey of Bangor, in 590.

* His name was Amphibalus, one of our earliest English confessors, who is said to have converted and suffered martyrdom with Alban, in the persecution of Diocletian. Geoffry of Monmouth, according to Archbishop Ussher, is the first author by whom he is mentioned. Julius and Aaron, after suffering martyrdom, were buried in Caerleon, and had each a church dedicated to him. After Albanus and Amphibalus, they were esteemed the chief proto-martyrs of Britannia Major. In ancient times there were three fine churches in this city, one dedicated to Julius the Martyr, ornamented (!) with a choir of Nuns; another to Aaron his associate, ennobled with an order of Canons; and the third distinguished as the metropolitan see of Wales. Amphibalus, the instructer of Albanus in the true faith, was born in this place. This city is well situated on the river Usk, navigable to the sea, and adorned with woods and meadows. The Roman ambassadors here received their audience at the court of the great King Arthur: and

revolted from the gods, rather than deliver him into the hands of justice, that he might be punished for his blasphemy; for this misbehaviour you shall be treated like that criminal, if you pretend to go off from our religion." Nevertheless, Alban was not to be intimidated: he frankly declared himself to be a Christian, that he was not moved by the threatenings of the Magistrate, and that he could not obey his orders. The Judge then asked him about his family. Alban told him, that question was altogether foreign to the purpose; but that, if he were desirous of receiving information respecting the true religion, he assured him that he was a Christian, and would gladly be serviceable to him in that character. The Magistrate was excessively irritated by his replies, and commanded him to sacrifice immediately to the gods, if he expected to be for ever happy. Alban told him that those sacrifices were offered to evil spirits; that the Pagans paid homage to devils, who were in no condition to assist their votaries, or make them one jot the better for any application they might make to them; that so far was this worship from procuring any advantage, on the other side, those who sacrificed to these statues would be eternally punished in hell for their idolatry. The freedom of this discourse still more, if possible, enraged the Magistrate, who ordered the holy confessor to be seized by the officers, and put to the question; imagining that might go farther with him than menacing; that his courage might give way, and his constancy be overcome by torture. But Alban disappointed the court; and though they strained their invention to put him to pain, yet he seemed to suffer not only with patience, but satisfaction. When the Judge perceived the rack signified nothing, and that Alban was not to be wrought upon by any terror, he ordered him to be beheaded. Being led to execution, he was to pass over a river; and coming to the bridge, he found a vast crowd of people, of all ages and degrees, many of whom were supposed to attend him out of respect. The bridge being blocked up with this vast number, who could scarcely all have passed until night, Alban, whose zeal could not well digest any delay of his martyrdom, came to the river-side, and, lifting up his eyes to heaven, offered a mental prayer; upon which the stream immediately parting, the channel was, it is said, passable. This, we may imagine, says Collier, was a surprising spectacle to the company, since the executioner himself was converted by it. This man, being struck with the miracle, and touched with the grace of God, threw away his drawn sword; and, when he came to the place, fell down at Alban's feet, and desired that, instead of beheading him, he might have the honour to die with him, or, rather for him, if they pleased. The headsman turning Christian, made a stop in the execution; upon which Alban walked up a neighbouring hill, where,

here also the Archbishop Dubricius ceded his honours to David of Menevia, the metropolitan see being translated from this place to Menevia, according to the prophecy of Merlin Ambrosius. (Itinerary of Archbishop Baldwin through Wales, by Sir Richard Colt Hoare, Bart., &c., &c., 4to. vol. i., p. 104.) "This holy man (called Amphibalus) suffered at Redburn, about three miles from Verulam, in which town Thomas Rudburn, who wrote in the fifteenth century, affirms there were two knives of an extraordinary size, supposed to be used upon this occasion." (Collier, Eccles. Hist.)

praying for water, a fountain burst out immediately at his feet. Here the martyr suffered, and received his crown: the person, it is said, who struck off his head was seized with exemplary vengeance, his eyes dropping out of his head immediately upon the stroke being given to Alban. That soldier was also beheaded who refused to execute Alban, who, notwithstanding he had not time to receive the initiatory sacrament, was baptized in his own blood.* The Judge, being surprised with these unexpected accidents, and astonished at so many interpositions of Divine Providence, ordered a cessation to the persecution.†

Some martyrdoms in the East again arrest our attention. Among these we are called to enumerate that of Timothy, a truly religious man; but being apprehended by virtue of the imperial edicts, he was carried before Urban, the Governor of Palestine, an individual notorious for his cruelty, even more than his predecessor Flavian had been, who had sufficiently distinguished himself by his rigorous and energetic persecutions of the church. When Timothy was brought before him, he attempted his constancy by the most exquisite torments; but having the mortification to find him invincible to all his tortures, he sentenced him to be burnt to death by a slow fire, in order that his death might be more lingering and painful. We then meet with Philip of Heraclea, a Bishop, and his two companions, who suffered martyrdom. He had for some time appeared in a very advantageous light as Deacon and Priest; he was in advanced age, and raised to the episcopal dignity by the unanimous voice of all who were concerned in his election. Severus and Hermes, the first a Priest and the second a Deacon, were the chief of his disciples, and were so well formed by his hand, that they were ready to join him, not only in the profession of their faith, but also in confirming the truth with their blood. Philip had governed the church of Heraclea, the metropolis of Thrace, for some time with the utmost prudence and vigilance, when the imperial orders for persecuting the Christians

* Elliott, Delineation of Romanism. London Edition, p. 123.

† Alban is supposed to have suffered on the 20th of June, near the city of Verulam, which, in the time of Bede, was called Uverlæmacestir, or Uvaliojacestir. In this place, when the times grew more favourable, there was a stately church built in honour of the martyr's memory, where, as Bede continues, sick people are recovered, and several miraculous cures performed to this very day. The place where Alban suffered was called Holm Hurst by the Saxons, which signifies a woody place. This relation contains an account of the ancient acts of Alban's martyrdom, which Bede has inserted in his Ecclesiastical History, without making the least question of the authority. This narrative used likewise to be read upon Alban's anniversary in the English Church, before the Norman Conquest, as appears by the Saxon copy in the Cambridge edition of Bede; and by the Breviary, secundum usum Sarum; first probably drawn up by Osmund, who might receive this particular service, put into form by Alfrick, who was Abbot of St. Alban's, about the end of the tenth century. Matthew Paris, in his history of the Abbots of St. Alban's, tells us, that "this Alfric, upon the promotion of his brother Leofric to the see of Canterbury, being chosen Abbot of St. Alban's, drew up the short history of St. Alban's sufferings, which is now used in the Church, and set notes to it; and, by the interest of his brother the Archbishop, brought the form into public use throughout the province, and raised the anniversary to a holy day." This relation concerning St. Alban, mentioned by Bede, agrees exactly with a very ancient account written in the Verulamian, or British language, as Matthew Paris informs us. (Collier, Eccles. Hist.)

were first issued. The dangers which presented themselves to his view, gave him not the least disturbance. Several of the flock, solicitous for the safety of the Pastor, advised him to retire, and, if possible, avoid the storm which was ready to break over his head; but Philip would not listen to the proposal, and exhorted his flock to patience, assuring them, that in this way they might defeat the most malicious designs of their enemies, and convert what was intended for their destruction into the means of improving their virtue and piety. Philip was instructing his people in these Gospel truths, when Aristomachus, an officer of the town of Heraclea, undertook to execute the Governor's orders, and shut up the Christian churches. The Bishop endeavoured to convince him, that the Christian religion could not be destroyed by that act of violence, so long as the living temples of the Holy Ghost were in existence; assuring him that the Almighty dwelt not in houses made with hands, but in the hearts of such as love and fear him. Aristomachus, however, proceeded according to his commission, and seized all the sacred books and vessels, which was a very great mortification to the Christians. Philip, though not allowed to enter his own church, nevertheless, took his station at the door, where he instructed and encouraged the people according to their necessities. Bassus, the Governor of the province, finding the people from time to time congregated with their Bishop, ordered them all to appear before him, and then demanded of them who was their instructor. Philip instantly replied that he was the person; upon which the Magistrate reiterated the Emperor's orders, which prohibited Christian assemblies, and directed the persons assembling to be put to death, if they refused to sacrifice to the pagan gods. "Now, therefore," he said, "bring all the vessels which are used in your worship, and the Scriptures which you read to and teach the people, and give them up to me, before you are compelled to do so by torture." "If," replied the Bishop, "you take pleasure in seeing us suffer, we are prepared for the worst you can do. This infirm body is in your power: use it as you please. The vessels you demand shall be given up; for God is not honoured by gold or silver: the ornaments of the souls of his servants are more pleasing to him than the decorations of churches. But with regard to the sacred books, it is neither proper for me to part with them, nor for you to receive them." This answer so incensed the Governor, that he immediately ordered the executioner and his officers to attend the court; among whom was one Mucapor, a person distinguished for his inhumanity, who was fixed upon to torture the Prelate. When he had endured his punishment for some time, Hermes, who was then present, in an abundance of zeal, assured the Governor, that it was not in his power to destroy the word of God, which was so firmly rooted in the hearts of the faithful, that it would be still preserved, though all the books which contain that sacred treasure were lost. This speech drew the indignation of the Judge upon him, who ordered him to be scourged; after which he accompanied the Governor's assistant to the place where the church plate and the Scriptures were kept. The officer attempting to put some of the sacred vessels aside for his own use, was opposed by Hermes, who suffered

for his freedom. Bassus, being informed of what had passed, severely reprimanded Publius, the officer; directed some care to be taken of Hermes, who had received a wound from the officer on his face; and gave directions at the same time for bringing in all the plate and books that could be found. Philip and his congregation were conveyed to the market-place under a strong escort, with a design on the one hand of diverting the pagans, and on the other of deterring the Christians from following the example of those who went before. To render the assembly of the Christians even more impracticable, Bassus ordered the church to be uncovered, and the doors to be walled up, which was immediately done; after which a fire was kindled, and the sacred books thrown into it. The news of this sacrilegious act having been brought to Philip, who was in the market-place, surrounded by a crowd of spectators, he addressed himself to them in a discourse, in order to show how little we ought to dread the material or temporary fire, but rather the fire which is eternal, and is kindled by the justice of the Most High; "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." The exemplary Prelate had scarcely finished his oration, when Cataphroneus, a pagan Priest, attended by his assistants, appeared with the instruments of sacrifice, and the food which had been offered in idolatrous service. This detestable sight to the Christian provoked Hermes to such a degree, as to lead him to declare aloud, that what was designed for a feast unto them, was altogether diabolical, and was conveyed thither with the intention of polluting the souls of the faithful. On which occasion Philip exclaimed, "The will of God be done."

Not long after this, Bassus himself, attended by a great concourse of people of both sexes, came to the market-place; some of whom expressed great compassion for the suffering Christians; while others, especially a few Jews, clamoured violently against them, asserting that they ought to be compelled to adore the gods. As soon as the Governor could be heard, he besought the Bishop to sacrifice to the heathen deities, to the Emperors, and to the fortune of the city. To this the Bishop replied, that Christians were instructed to pay their devotions to the one true God only; that their Sovereign had undoubtedly a right to civil obedience, but not to any religious worship; and that nothing made by the hands of man should ever influence him in the rejection of Almighty God. The Governor very significantly pointed to a large and beautiful image of Hercules, and advised him to consider the veneration that was due to such an excellent piece of workmanship. "Alas!" replied the Prelate, "how unhappy are you, who are so grossly mistaken in the nature of the Deity, and so utterly ignorant of the truth, as to adore the workmanship of your own hands! What real, intrinsic, spiritual value, can there possibly be in gold, silver, brass, iron, or lead, which are dug out of the earth? You are unacquainted with the divinity of Christ, which is incomprehensible to all human capacity; but of what power can your idols boast, which are manufactured by base mechanics, a drunken statuary, or some licentious carver, and then decorated by the art of the tailor and the goldsmith? And, nevertheless, these are your gods!" After

other similar observations on the absurdities of Paganism, he concluded, that from what he had already said, it appeared that the Heathen worshipped what might lawfully be trampled under foot, and that they made gods of such things as Providence had designed for their use. Bassus, who could not but admire the resolution with which the martyr gave utterance to his sentiments, asserted that he despaired of being able to persuade the Bishop to offer sacrifice.

The attention of the Governor was now directed to Hermes, of whom he demanded the requisite proof of obedience to the Emperors. The Deacon, without any hesitation, urged his religion as an impediment. Bassus then asked, "What was his station in the world?" Hermes replied, "That he was an officer, and punctual in following the directions of his master." The Magistrate laid hold on that profession, and demanded to know, whether he would follow the example of his Bishop, supposing he could be prevailed upon to respect the gods of the empire. "I would not," replied Hermes: "but I am thoroughly satisfied that he will never do it; for our persuasion and resolution are the same." After several useless threats, and entreating him to sacrifice, he and the Bishop were conveyed to the prison. On the road thither, the venerable Prelate was greatly insulted by the rabble, and several times thrown down; yet manifested neither grief nor resentment at their cruel and barbarous treatment.

After a few days' confinement, the prisoners were removed to a house near the jail, where they were allowed the liberty of conversing with their friends, whom they endeavoured to edify by pious discourses and exhortations to courage and perseverance. The conversion of some pagans, whom curiosity drew thither, becoming notorious, they were remanded to the prison: still, however, they had the opportunity of seeing their friends, who resorted thither from all parts. The period of the office of Bassus having expired, he was succeeded by Justin, a man of a violent and inhuman temper. On the arrival of the new Governor, Zoilus, a Magistrate of Heraclea, caused Philip to be carried before him. Justin asked if he were the Bishop of the Christians. Philip replied in the affirmative. The new Governor then began to set before him the penalties denounced by the Emperors; that they peremptorily insisted on all their subjects sacrificing to the gods; and, in compassion to his grey hairs, advised him to comply with the mandate. "I am a Christian," said Philip, "and, therefore, cannot comply with your request: your commission is to punish my refusal, but not to force my compliance." Justin assured him, that he should feel the weight of his authority. The devoted Bishop observed, "You may rack and torture, but can never conquer me; for it is not in the power of man to induce me to sacrifice to idols." Justin then assured him, that he should be dragged through the streets by the feet; and, if he survived that punishment, he should be thrown into prison to suffer additional torture. Philip declared that he was ready to bear that or any other torture for the sake of the religion which he professed: upon which his feet were

tied together, and he was dragged through the town, much wounded with the stones, and thrust into his old quarters.*

The enraged populace had long been in search for Severus, who now surrendered himself, and was carried before the Governor. Justin, after much intimidation, found him immovable: he was recommitted to the prison. Upon his again representing to Hermes the punishment due to his disobedience, the martyr replied, "You will never gain your end: I have been educated in this faith; my holy Master has instructed me in these principles from my cradle; I can never renounce my religion, nor act in contradiction to the obligation which it lays upon me. This is my fixed resolution, and you may now use me as you please." On this declaration he was remanded to his place of confinement, where he and his companion remained not less than seven months; from whence they were removed to Adrianople, where they were kept in a private house until the Governor arrived. On the day following Justin reached the city; and Philip was brought before him. He declared that he still persisted in the profession of Christianity; for which confession he was severely scourged, and sent back to the prison. On the following day, Hermes was brought to the bar, and assailed with both promises and threatenings; but he remained invulnerable. Three days after Justin ordered these prisoners to appear before him; when he asked Philip why he conducted himself so rashly. He answered, "My behaviour is not the effect of rashness, but of my love to, and fear of, Almighty God, who made the world, and who will finally judge the living and the dead. His commands I dare not transgress. I have hitherto done my duty to the Emperors, and am always ready to

* Among the legendary tales which amused the multitude at this period, or which had reference to this time, "I have oftentimes before complained, that the stories of saints have been powdered and sauced with divers untrue traditions, and fabulous inventions of men, who, either of a superstitious devotion, or of a subtle practice, have so mangled their stories and lives, that almost nothing remaineth in them simple and uncorrupt, as in the usual portasses, or breviaries, wont to be read for daily service, is manifest and evident to be seen; wherein few legends there be able to abide the touch of history, if they were truly tried. This I write upon the occasion specially of good Katharine, whom now I have in hand; in whom, although I nothing doubt but in her life was great holiness, in her knowledge excellency, in her death constancy; yet, that all things be true that be storied of her, neither do I affirm, neither am I bound so to think; so many strange fictions of her be feigned diversely of divers writers, whereof some seem incredible, some also impudent. As where Petrus de Natalibus, (lib. x., fol., Lugd., 1508,) writing of her conversion, declareth, how that Katharine sleeping before a certain picture or table of the crucifix, Christ with his mother Mary appeared unto her, and when Mary had offered her unto Christ to be his wife, he first refused her for her blackness. The next time, she being baptized, Mary, appearing again, offered her to marry with Christ, who then, being liked, was espoused to him and married, having a golden ring at the same time put on her finger in her sleep, &c. Bergomensis writeth thus, that because she in the sight of the people openly resisted the Emperor Maxentius to his face, and rebuked him for his cruelty, therefore she was commanded and committed upon the same to prison; which seemeth hitherto not much to digress from the truth. It followeth, moreover, that the same night an angel came to her, comforting and exhorting her to be strong and constant unto the martyrdom, for that she was a maid accepted in the sight of God; and that the Lord would be with her for whose honour she did fight, and that he would give her a mouth and wisdom which her enemies should not withstand." (Foxe's Acts and Monuments, vol. i., p. 274. Edit. Seeley, London, 1843.)

comply with their just orders, according to the doctrine of our Lord Christ, who bade us render to Cæsar and to the Most High their due; but I am obliged to prefer heaven to earth, and to obey God rather than man,"

The Governor then directed his attention to Hermes, and advised him to consult his own safety, by offering sacrifice. But he endeavoured to show the reasonableness of his refusing, by exhibiting the enormous folly of pagan worship: at this he was interrupted by the Magistrate, who remarked, that he spoke as though he intended him forthwith to embrace Christianity. To this the martyr replied, "I cordially wish that you, and all who are present, may ere long enjoy that happiness." Justin, astonished at the invincible courage thus displayed by the combatants, consulted with his brother Magistrates on the bench, and afterwards condemned them to be burnt alive; which sentence was speedily carried into execution. Severus, who was now left in prison, looked upon himself as a ship at sea without a pilot; at the same time he was full of joy and gratitude to Almighty God who had crowned his companions with glory, and earnestly entreated that he might be permitted to partake of the same happiness. This was vouchsafed on the following day; but the manner of his death is not recorded.*

Diocletian was not pleased with his reception at Rome, and therefore left the capital, and returned to Nicomedia; but his constitution was greatly broken, and he was physically in a state of great danger. Egypt was, doubtless, one of the first countries in which the Christians were tormented; † and this was the case for a number of years, when thousands, both men, women, and children, despising the present life for the sake of the Saviour's word, submitted to death in various shapes. Some, after being torn with scrapings and the rack, and most dreadful scourgings, and other almost innumerable agonies, were finally committed to the flames; some were plunged and drowned in the sea, some voluntarily offered their heads to the executioners, some died in the midst of their torments, some wasted away by famine, and others were fixed to the cross. Many, indeed, were executed as malefactors usually were; others, more cruelly, were nailed with the head downwards, and kept alive until they were destroyed by starvation on the cross itself. ‡ The power of description would fail to give an idea of the sufferings of the martyrs of Thebais. These, instead of hooks, had their backs scraped with shells, and in this way were mangled until they died. Women were tied by one foot, and then raised on high in the air by certain machines, with their bodies uncovered, presenting a most indecent, cruel, and inhuman spectacle to all beholders: others perished by being bound to trees,

* Some authors are inclined to think that these individuals suffered under Julian the Apostate; others, under Decius: but the order for burning the Scriptures, and destroying the churches, was peculiar to the time of Diocletian, which has induced the most authentic writers to date this martyrdom at the close of the year 304, when the persecution first reached the East.

† Burton's Lectures on Eccles. Hist. Lect. xxix.

‡ Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. viii., cap. 9.

the branches of which being drawn together by machinery, then suddenly allowing the boughs to resume their natural position, the limbs were torn asunder in a barbarous manner. These cruelties were perpetrated, not only for a few days, or occasionally, but for a series of years. At one time, ten or more, at another, more than twenty, at another time, not less than thirty, and even sixty; and again at another time, a hundred men with their wives and little children, were slain in one day, whilst they were condemned to numerous and varied punishments. We ourselves, says Eusebius, have observed, when on the spot, many crowded together in one day, some in the torments of flames, some suffering decapitation; so that the murderous weapon was completely blunted, and, having lost its edge, broke to pieces; and the executioners themselves, wearied with slaughter, were obliged to relieve one another.*

Among others who, at this period, endured as seeing him who is invisible, was Porphyrius, who was servant to Pamphilus, a Christian Priest, who had discharged all the duties of a master and a Christian towards him, having instructed him in the path of piety, and in the knowledge of the holy Scriptures. Pamphilus was condemned to die, with others, for the truth, when Porphyrius boldly interposed, and requested permission to bury the body of his master, and also those of his companions. The Governor, viewing his concern for their mortal remains as proof of his attachment to the cause in which they were about to shed their blood, ordered him to be seized, and asked him of what profession he was. He acknowledged himself to be a Christian, though as yet he had not been baptized: he was immediately delivered to an officer, who commanded him to sacrifice to the gods. He rejected the proposal with becoming firmness, whereupon the tormentors began to exercise their cruelties upon him: they scraped off his flesh, till the bones were denuded; nevertheless, they could not extort a sigh, a groan, or a tear from him. The mortification of Firmilian at finding himself subdued by one whom he viewed as being utterly contemptible, was so great, that he resolved to make an end of him: he therefore ordered him to be burnt by a slow fire. He was consequently fastened to a post, and the fire kindled: † the

* Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. viii., cap. 10.

† This horrible punishment of *vivicomburation* is one of the oldest tortures on record, and has been continued till the year 1826, when a heretic was burned in Spain. The first fatal instance of its use among the Christians was under Constantine. Semancha defends the infliction of this punishment on heretics, from the parable of the tares and wheat. (De Cathol. Instit., tit. xlvi., sect. 46.) It was used among the patriarchs as the punishment of unchastity; (Gen. xxxviii. 24;) and among the Jews for the same offence in a Priest's daughter; (Lev. xxi. 9;) and for incest. (Lev. xx. 14.) The Philistines punished treason in the same manner. (Judges xv. 6.) The Romans adopted it. This frightful punishment, which we trust is at length exploded from the sanction of the laws of civilized nations, was too frequently commanded by Constantine. It had been the most common mode of torture among his persecuting predecessors. It seems to have been the favourite penalty with many of his successors. It was the *ultima ratio* of the Church of Rome, which borrowed it, in common with the laws against heresy and heretics, from the imperial decrees. The last time that fire was applied as a punishment, was in the exercise of the Lynch law in America. May it never be known again, even in the moral deserts of the West! (Townsend, Ecclesiastical and Civil History, vol. i., p. 248.)

martyr maintained a serene and undisturbed mind, singing praises to the Most High, and invoking the name of Christ, until his spirit returned to God. We are also informed of one Seleucus who was present at the martyrdom of Porphyrius, and went and informed Pamphilus how his servant had suffered; as he was embracing him and some other Christian prisoners, and encouraging them by the courageous example of Porphyrius, he was seized by the soldiers and taken before the Governor, who, without even the form of a trial, ordered his head to be struck off. Seleucus was a native of Cappadocia, and had borne arms under the Emperor. His person and strength had recommended him to the notice and esteem of his commanding officers, which procured for him considerable promotion in the army, from which, about five years previous, he had been broken on account of his Christian profession; since which period he had lived in privacy. In him, it is said, the orphan found a parent, the widow a husband, and the sick a physician; from him also the weak anticipated support, the oppressed relief, and the poor bread. His Christianity appeared to want nothing to make it perfect but this trial.

The persecution was now almost at its utmost height. The Magistrates were directed to make free use of torture to compel every one bearing the name of Christian to join in the worship of the gods. These orders being strictly obeyed by men in power, the Christian church was reduced to the last extremity. Hence, according to the disposition of the several Governors was the execution of the imperial edict. Some only sent the Christians into banishment, when the attempt to make them offer sacrifice failed. Others deprived them of an eye, or lamed one of their feet by burning it; others exposed them to wild beasts, or lacerated their bodies with iron hooks, or with the scourge, and afterwards sprinkled vinegar or salt on the wounds, or dropped melted lead into them. In Phrygia, a whole city, with all its inhabitants, was burnt to ashes, because an individual in it would not offer sacrifice. Some Christians also brought death upon themselves,* by holding religious meetings, contrary to the Emperor's prohibition, or by voluntarily presenting themselves before the Governors, and requesting to be martyred. With the exception of Gaul, streams of Christian blood flowed in all the provinces of the Roman empire. Everywhere the Christian temples lay in ruins, and all assemblies for worship were suspended. The major part had forsaken the provinces, and taken refuge among the barbarians. Such as were unable or unwilling to do this, kept themselves concealed, and were afraid for their lives if they appeared in public. The Ministers of Christ were either slain, or mutilated and sent to the mines, or banished the country. The avaricious Magistrates and Judges had seized upon nearly all the church-property, and their private possessions. Many, through dread of undergoing torture, had made away with their own lives, and many had apostatized from the faith; and what remained

* Euseb., De Mart. Palest., cap. 3. Euseb., De Vita Constantini, lib. ii., cap. 51. Lactant., Instit. Divinar. lib. v., cap. 11. Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. ix., cap. 9; lib. viii., cap. 12. Sulpitius Severus, lib. ii., cap. 32.

of the Christian community consisted of a few weak, poor, and timorous persons.

Shortly after this period, Cyprian and Justina suffered martyrdom; and ere long Timothy and Maura increased the number, the former of whom was a Deacon in Mauritania, who was married to Maura. They had not been married above three weeks before Timothy was seized by his persecutors, and carried before Arrianus, the Governor of Thebais, who endeavoured to awe him into an act of idolatry by the fear of punishment; but he replied, that the Spirit of Christ residing in him forbade him to comply with his desire or command. The Governor, being aware that Timothy had the custody of the sacred Scriptures, commanded him to give them up, that he might burn them, in accordance with the order of the Emperor; to this the confessor replied, that if he had children, he would rather present them for sacrifice, than be accessory to the destruction of the word of God. The Judge, being irritated at his reply, ordered his eyes to be put out with red-hot irons, that the sacred books no longer might be of any service to him. He calmly underwent this torture; and afterwards, he was hung up by the feet, a heavy weight appended to his neck, and a gag placed in his mouth. All who witnessed these cruelties were amazed at the fortitude of Timothy: however, some officious individuals acquainted the Governor that he was but recently married, and suggested, that although he appeared superior to the attempts which were made to subdue his constancy, he might probably not be proof against the solicitations of his wife. Arrianus, being pleased with the proposal, caused Maura to be introduced, whom he endeavoured to intimidate, by informing her, that the only way to preserve her husband's life was to persuade him to sacrifice to the heathen deities, moreover promising her a handsome gratuity if she prevailed. Maura was but weak in the faith, and, being strongly attached to her husband, employed all her persuasive influence to induce him to pay the required honour to the idols of Paganism; the gag was also removed from his mouth, to give him an opportunity of avowing the efficacy of conjugal love; but he was no sooner restored to the use of speech, than he declared his abhorrence of her mistaken affection, and his resolution of persevering in the faith of Christ. The result of this conflict between natural affection and the stern calls of duty was, that Maura resolved to imitate his courage and fidelity, and either accompany or follow him to the paradise of God. The Governor vainly attempted to shake her constancy; but finding her invincible, he ordered her to be tortured, and ultimately she was condemned to be crucified in company with her husband. When on the way to the place of execution, Maura was met by her mother, who endeavoured to persuade her from persevering in a profession which conducted her to such a disgraceful end; but she was superior to all such considerations, and, together with her husband, met death with great intrepidity.

Agricola, with his servant, suffered also for the name and sake of Christ. The general behaviour of the former engaged the esteem of his pagan neighbours, till he, with his servant Vitalis, whom he had

instructed in the knowledge of the Saviour, were both apprehended, and taken before the Magistrate, where they witnessed a "good profession before many witnesses." Vitalis was first tortured, and died under the hands of the persecutors through the severity of the pain. The martyrdom of Agricola was delayed for some days, in the expectation, that by reflecting on what his servant had suffered, he might be induced to save his own life by a renunciation of the faith; but they were soon convinced that Vitalis had confirmed and established Agricola in his resolution of adhesion to Christ, though at the expense of his blood; he was therefore fastened with large nails to a cross, and had the honour to follow the Saviour to paradise by the same steps which he had trodden before: after his death, he was not, as others, taken down from the cross, but was interred with the cross at Bologna in Italy.

The persecution in Antioch still continued. In Pontus, other horrible punishments did the martyrs of Christ suffer; some of whom endured bodkins thrust under the nails at the end of the fingers; some were sprinkled with boiling lead; so numerous and diversified were the torments with which the martyrs were afflicted. Phileas, the Bishop of Themuis, a man well learned, has given, in his epistle to his diocess, a description of them:—"Free leave being given to all persons, so disposed, to annoy the Christians, some beat them with cudgels, some with rods, others with whips, some again with leathern thongs, and others with ropes. The spectacle of the beating was sometimes interchanged with other torments, exhibiting much wanton cruelty. Some of the martyrs, having their hands tied behind them, were suspended on the wooden rack, and every limb was stretched out with certain machines; in this position, the tormentors, by command of the Judge, operated on them all over the body; and not only on the sides, (as in the case of murderers,) but also on the belly, the legs, and the cheeks, they tortured them with scrapers. Others were hung up by one hand at a portico, the constant straining of their limbs and joints causing them the most dreadful pain. Others were bound face to face against pillars, their feet not touching the ground; so the cords, being strained by the weight of the body, were drawn tighter and tighter. And this they had to endure, not merely while the President was at leisure personally to attend them, but almost the whole day; for when he passed from them to others, he appointed officials to stay by those whom he left, and watch whether any of them, overcome by the tortures, seemed to flinch, charging them to brace the cords unsparingly, and then, when about to expire, to let them down, and haul them along the ground. 'No care,' said he, 'ought to be taken of these Christians: let all treat them as unworthy the name of men.' Therefore our adversaries devised this second torture, to follow the beating. There were some who, after they had been scourged, lay in the stocks with their faces upward, their feet being stretched four holes asunder, unable to stand because of their fresh wounds, caused by the stripes which they had received all over their persons. Others threw themselves on the ground, where they lay, by reason of the innumerable wounds made by their tortures, exhibiting a spectacle more horrid to behold than the very

operation of torture, and bearing on their bodies the varied torments devised against them. Some of the martyrs expired under their tortures, having shamed the adversary by their persevering constancy. Others, being half-dead, were shut up in prison, where, in a few days, sinking under their sufferings, their martyrdom was consummated. The residue, having recovered by medical attention, became more stout and confident by time, and their abode in prison. Therefore, a new order was issued, and it was put to their choice whether, by touching the detestable sacrifice, they would free themselves from all molestation, and obtain an acceptable liberty; or whether, refusing to sacrifice, they would abide the sentence of death. For they well knew what was before prescribed to us by the sacred Scriptures: for 'he,' say they, 'that sacrificeth to other gods, shall be utterly destroyed.' And again, 'Thou shalt have no other gods but me.'"*

The persecution in Syria and Palestine continued, and the martyrs were numerous; sometimes ten, and occasionally twenty, were slain at once; and Damasus, Bede, Orosius, and Honorius assert, that there were slain in this persecution, within the space of thirty days, not less than seventeen thousand persons, besides a great number who were condemned to the mines. Lucian was a native of Syria, famous in his youth for his eloquence and learning; but finding no solid satisfaction in these studies, he sought for retirement. After the death of his parents, he disposed of his patrimony to charitable purposes, and turned his attention to the study of the holy Scriptures. Shortly after, he was ordained Priest in the city of Antioch, and became a vigilant and exemplary Pastor. Being conscious that the character which he bore obliged him to devote all his attainments to the service of the Most High, he not only employed his eloquence in leading men into the paths of piety, but his pen in rescuing the holy Scriptures from the corruptions introduced into them either from the variety of versions which had been made, or by the malicious designs of the enemies of the orthodox faith: this he accomplished either by a new translation of the sacred books, or a revisal of the Septuagint version, which he was able to give to the world in a more correct form, as he was well versed in the Hebrew language. He was a vigorous defender of the faith against the errors of Sabellius, who maintained the unity of person in God. Pancratius, a Priest, who professed that heresy, and who had felt the force of the arguments of Lucian, was resolved to rid himself of so formidable and troublesome an opponent by any means which might come in his way. The present persecution of the church presented one, which he forthwith embraced, and Lucian was speedily betrayed by him into the hands of the myrmidons of the Emperor. He endured a protracted imprisonment, during which he wrote an Apology for the Christian doctrine: he procured its presentation to the Governor of the palace at Nicomedia, who was so far from being softened towards the author, that orders were issued for him to be still more rigidly confined. But this effort of Lucian was not entirely useless: if it did not secure the professors of Christianity from suffering, it inspired new courage and resolution into many,

* Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. viii., cap. x.

whose constancy had well-nigh been shaken by the fear of death. Here also it was that he wrote several letters to the church at Antioch, one of which terminates in the following manner,—"All the martyrs that are with me salute you." Lucian* continued in prison till Maximinian succeeded to the empire in the East, who revived the persecutions against the Christians as a religious act, judging that this would ingratiate himself with his subjects, who viewed all the professors of the faith as enemies of the gods. He had observed the constancy and courage of the faithful in the midst of the most severe and unheard-of torments, and employed his utmost efforts to overcome Lucian by gentleness and kind treatment. Finding these efforts ineffectual, he was enraged at his disappointment, and commanded him to be cruelly maltreated: this he endured with becoming fortitude, till the inventive powers of his executioners seemed to be at a stand, through inability to devise any torture over which he had not triumphed. At length they fixed upon one which they anticipated must succeed: they strewed the ground of the dungeon where he was confined with sharp pieces of flint, broken crockery, and the like; they rolled him thereon, naked and sore as he was with what he had already suffered at their hands, and then left him to lie upon them, judging that this would effectually deprive him of sleep; after this they kept him several days without sustenance, and then brought him food which had been offered to idols, thinking it impossible for him to abstain from eating, who had fasted so long a time. In this also they were disappointed; for although Lucian might have reasoned as the Apostle Paul, "that the idol was nothing," and therefore what was offered to it could contract no real impurity, nothing being unclean before God, but sin; yet, like that Apostle, Lucian was determined not to offend his weak brother by his proceeding, and resolved not to give the Heathen any ground for triumph. With this view he left the care of his life to Almighty God, and preferred the last extremity of suffering to a compliance attended by such circumstances. The Emperor was resolved to put a speedy end to the affair. He ordered Lucian to be brought before him, and then placed him on the rack, asked where he was born, who were his parents, and what was his profession. Lucian, who was well assured that no answer of his would be able to change the resolution of the Emperor, made no other reply to his interrogatories but that he was a Christian; a reply which sufficiently expressed his heavenly country, and his profession, had it been rightly understood. Upon this he received sentence of death, and ere long suffered martyrdom.

* Lucian is frequently mentioned by ecclesiastical writers as a man of great learning and piety. Jerome says, that "Lucian was so laborious in the study of the Scriptures, that in his own time some copies of the Scriptures were known by the name of Lucian." And we learn from another part of his works, that Lucian's revision of the Septuagint version of the Old Testament was generally used by the churches from Constantinople to Antioch. Lucian also made a revision of the New Testament, which Jerome considered inferior to his edition of the Septuagint. What the opinion of Lucian was on the subject of the Trinity has been much questioned; and though the evidence is very strong in favour of his having maintained the same sentiments with Arius, or Paul of Samosata, yet the accounts concerning him are so difficult to be reconciled, that this is a point which cannot be easily decided.

The year 305 brought a great change in the government of the empire.* Diocletian, as we have seen, had returned to Nicomedia greatly indisposed. His health, which had been for some time declining, became much worse at the end of the year, so that a report was spread of his death. He was seized with a protracted and depressing malady, which affected him, it is supposed, with some temporary derangement; secluded him within the impenetrable precincts of the palace, whose sacred secrets were forbidden to be betrayed to the popular ear. This concealment gave currency to every kind of gloomy rumour. The whole Roman world waited, with mingled anxiety, hope, and apprehension, the news of his dissolution. Diocletian, to the universal astonishment, appeared again in the robes of empire; to their still greater astonishment, he appeared only to lay them aside, to abdicate the throne, and to retire to the peaceful occupation of his palace and agricultural villa, on the Illyrian shore of the Adriatic. This event was, doubtless, the result of the machinations of Galerius, who, not content with procuring the abdication of Diocletian, persuaded Herculeus to follow the same example; so that, while one Emperor abdicated at Nicomedia, his colleague went through the same form, with ill-dissembled reluctance, at Milan. A circumstantial account is given by Lactantius, of the proposal made by Galerius in the palace of Nicomedia to Diocletian, to abdicate his authority, and of the reluctance with which the old man complied with the request of his ambitious colleague. At last, however, he was compelled to yield. He then made a feeble effort to name his successor, and Constantine, the son of Constantius, whose princely qualities were universally allowed, was proposed by Diocletian, but rejected by Galerius, who named Severus, a creature of his own; and his nephew Daja, afterwards named Maximin. It was in vain that the aged Augustus objected to their unfitness for the empire: the purpose of Galerius was formed; and on the same day, Diocletian at Nicomedia, and Herculeus at Milan, resigned office, Galerius and Constantius were elevated to the rank of Augusti, and Maximin and Severus were proclaimed the two Cæsars.†

The great scheme of Diocletian, the joint administration of the empire by associate Augusti, with their subordinate Cæsars, if it had averted for a time the dismemberment of the empire, and had introduced some vigour into the provincial governments, had introduced other evils of appalling magnitude; but its fatal consequences were more manifest directly the master-hand was withdrawn which had organized the new machine of government. Fierce jealousy succeeded at once, among the rival Emperors, to decent concord; all subordination was lost; and a succession of civil wars between the contending Sovereigns distracted the whole world. The earth groaned under the separate tyranny of its many masters; and, according to the strong expression of a rhetorical writer, the grinding taxation had so exhausted the proprietors and the cultivators of the soil, the mer-

* Burton's Lect. on Eccles. Hist. Lect. xxix. Milman's Hist. of Christianity, vol. ii., p. 280.

† Welsh, Elements of Church History, vol. i., p. 356.

chants and the artisans, that none remained to tax but beggars.* The sufferings of the Christians, however, still inflicted with unceasing barbarity, were lost in the common sufferings of mankind. The rights of Roman citizenship, which had been violated in their persons, were now universally neglected; and to extort money, the chief persons of the towns, the unhappy *decurions*, who were responsible for the payment of the contributions, were put to the torture. Even the punishment, the wasting by a slow fire, invented to force the conscience of the devout Christians, was borrowed, in order to wring the reluctant impost from the unhappy provincial.

The abdication of Diocletian left the most implacable enemy of Christianity, Galerius, master of the East; and in the East the persecution of the Christians, as well as the general oppression of the subjects of the empire, continued in unmitigated severity. His nephew, one of the Cæsars, was the legitimate heir to his relentless violence of temper, and to his stern hostility to the Christian name. In the West the assumption of the purple by Maxentius, the son of the abdicated Maximian, (Herculeus,) had no unfavourable effect on the situation of the Christians. They suffered only with the rest of their fellow-subjects from the vices of Maxentius. If their matrons and virgins were not secure from his lust, it was the common lot of all who, although of the highest rank and dignity, might attract his

* That which gave rise to public and universal calamity, was the tax imposed at once on each province and city. Surveyors having been spread abroad, and occupied in a general and severe scrutiny, horrible scenes were exhibited, like the outrages of victorious enemies, and the wretched state of captives. Each spot of ground was measured, vines and fruit-trees numbered, lists taken of animals of every kind, and a capitation-roll made up. In cities, the common people, whether residing within or without the walls, were assembled; the market-places filled with crowds of families, all attended with their children and slaves; the noise of torture and scourges resounded; sons were hung on the rack, to force discovery of the effects of their fathers; the most trusty slaves compelled by pain to bear witness against their masters, and wives to bear witness against their husbands. In default of all other evidence, men were tortured to speak against themselves; and no sooner did agony oblige them to acknowledge what they had not, but those imaginary effects were noted down in the lists. Neither youth, nor old age, nor sickness, afforded any exemption. The diseased and the infirm were carried in; the age of each was estimated; and that the capitation-tax might be enlarged, years were added to the young, and struck off from the old. General lamentation and sorrow prevailed. Whatever, by the laws of war, conquerors had done to the conquered, the like did this man presume to perpetrate against Romans and the subjects of Rome, because his forefathers had been made liable to a like tax imposed by the victorious Trajan, as a penalty on the Dacians for their frequent rebellions. After this, money was levied for each head, as if a price had been paid for liberty to exist; yet full trust was not reposed on the same set of surveyors, but others, and others still, were sent round to make further discoveries; and thus the tributes were redoubled, not because the new surveyors made any fresh discoveries, but because they added at pleasure to the former rates, lest they should seem to have been employed to no purpose. Meanwhile the number of animals decreased, and men died; nevertheless, taxes were paid even for the dead; so that no one could either live, or cease to live, without being subject to impositions. There remained mendicants alone, from whom nothing could be exacted, and whom their misery and wretchedness secured from ill-treatment. But this pious man had compassion on them: and determining that they should remain no longer in indigence, he caused them all to be assembled, put on board vessels, and sunk in the sea. So merciful was he in making provision, that under his administration no man should want! And thus, while he took effectual measures that none, under the feigned pretext of poverty, should elude the tax, he put to death a multitude of real wretches, in violation of every law of humanity. (Lactant., De Mort. Persecut., cap. xxiii.)

insatiable passions. If a Christian matron, the wife of a Senator,* submitted to a voluntary death rather than to the loss of her honour, it was her beauty, not her Christianity, which marked her out as the victim of the tyrant. In the mean while, Galerius looked forward to the death of Constantius as placing the supreme authority in his hands; an event which took place A.D. 306. Eusebius tells us, that after he had for a long time avowed the one supreme God, and condemned their impiety who worshipped a plurality of gods, and had on all sides fortified his house by the prayers of holy men, he completed his life without trouble or disquietude, consecrating his wife and children to one God, the supreme King.

So long as Constantius swayed the sceptre, he acted as he thought fit with regard to the edicts for persecution. The countries under his government had not altogether escaped during the first two years; † but tranquillity was now restored for a season, and the Christians of Africa, who had suffered severely under Herculeus, felt the advantage of being under Constantius. Among the Palestinian martyrs, mention is made of Apphian about the close of the first year of the reign of Galerius, when the persecution was prosecuted with great rigour in the East. Apphian was a native of Lycia, a province in the south part of Lesser Asia, and descended from one of the most considerable families in that country. His parents sent him to Berytus to acquire the rudiments of learning. When he had made sufficient progress to qualify him for superior studies, he applied himself to the civil law, which was taught in great perfection in that place. Apphian spent some considerable time in Berytus, and on account of the thoughtful and sedate direction of his mind, he was preserved from the corruption which usually reigns, where young persons are masters of their own actions, before they possess sufficient prudence and judgment to govern themselves. He was but eighteen years of age when he returned to his father, who then held a considerable post under the government. We have no specific account which states the time when he embraced Christianity: it is, however, probable, that it was about the time that he completed his studies; ‡ for we are informed that his father's advancement inspired the son with no vanity, and even no desire to transgress the rule of Christian sobriety, which is too often forgotten by many who make a considerable figure in the world, or have any connexion with those who are raised above the rest of mankind. On the contrary, he was so zealous for the precepts of the Gospel, and looked on the honours and grandeur of the world with so much indifference, that he endeavoured to persuade his father and other relatives to abandon the attachment which they manifested to trifles such as these. His well-meant endeavours for their conversion meeting with but little success, he resolved to provide for the

* "He sank into every kind of wickedness, leaving no impurity or licentiousness untouched; committing every species of adultery and fornication, separating wives from their lawful husbands, and, after abusing these, sending them most shamefully violated back again to their husbands." (Euseb., Hist. Eccles., lib. viii., cap. 14.)

† See the Acts of Rogatianus and Donatianus, who suffered martyrdom at Nantes. (Apud Ruinart., p. 280.)

‡ Euseb., de Mart. Palest., cap. iv.

safety of his own soul, which might be placed in no little peril while he conversed and resided with such as lived according to the corrupt and mistaken maxims of the world. He accordingly left the paternal mansion secretly, in order to prevent any obstacle being thrown in his way, should his purpose be made known, and threw himself on the merciful care of a gracious Providence, which guided his steps to Cæsarea in Palestine. Here he placed himself under the direction of some pious Ecclesiastics, among whom was Eusebius the historian,* where he studied the sacred writings with great diligence, and, by prayer and other devout exercises, became prepared for that combat in which he shortly afterwards engaged.

The persecution which was commenced by Diocletian appeared to be in some measure subsided, or at least it did not burn with that heat which was satisfactory to an individual of such a cruel disposition as Galerius: that Emperor forthwith issued a fresh edict, for inflicting all manner of severities on the professors of Christianity. Urban, the Governor of Palestine, expressed prompt obedience to the commands of his Prince, by ordering a proclamation to be made, that all the heads of families in Cæsarea should repair to the heathen temples, and pay their devotions to the gods of the empire: care was also taken to enter the name of every one in a book kept for that purpose, so that no one could escape conforming to the imperial order, or suffering the penalty annexed to their disobedience. To give the greater sanction to this measure, the Governor appointed the time, when he gave notice that he would himself set the example of what he exacted from others as a proof of their loyalty and religion. Apphian being informed of the Governor's design, and stimulated with zeal for the honour of the true God, and a holy detestation of the abominations practised among the Heathen, under the sacred name of religion, made his way to the pagan temple, without communicating his design to any. He entered the place devoted to superstition and idolatry, passed the guards without experiencing any molestation, and placed himself contiguous to Urban the Governor, who, when he raised his hand, to execute the abominable act of sacrifice, Apphian laid hold of it, and entreated that he would consider the absurdity of what he was about to do, and even offered to convince him of the unreasonableness and the folly of sacrificing to devils. This might seem an imprudent and a rash action, in an individual not yet called to a confession of his faith, and whose age and station in the world neither added weight to what he said, nor authority to what he attempted.† Indeed, we must look on this action as one of those

* "Having associated with us in Cæsarea," says Eusebius, "and having studied the holy Scriptures as much as could be for a short time, and having prepared himself most cheerfully by the proper exercises and discipline, he finally made so illustrious an end, as could not be witnessed again without amazement." (De Mart. Palest.)

† Milner says, "His imprudence was great, and his zeal very irregular and extravagant; but who will not admire the sincerity of that love of Christ, which carried this ardent youth through all hardships; who would not prefer his disposition, with all his faults, to the cowardice, and love of the world, which in our times prevent such numbers from daring to show true regard for the divine Saviour?" (Hist. of the Church, cent. iv., chap. i., vol. i., p. 489. Edit., Grantham. 8vo. 1847.) We may rely upon it, that much more mercy will be shown on the great day of account, towards those who have

extraordinary circumstances which transpire, and are recorded, not for our imitation, but to excite our gratitude and admiration to Almighty God, who inspired these champions for the truth with such a courage and resolution as made them desire suffering and death as a great happiness.

The guard, surprised and enraged at the conduct of Apphianus, fell upon him with unbridled fury, and dragged him away to prison, where he lay for four-and-twenty hours in the stocks, with his legs extended to the utmost. The next day he was brought before the Governor, who endeavoured to soften his resolution by large promises, and to shake his courage by menaces; but found him invincible to all he could say, and as intrepid in the court as he was in the temple. Urban, finding all his efforts ineffectual, ordered him to be placed on the rack, and tormented with the *ungulæ*, till his body was so torn, that his bones appeared, and his head so swollen with the blows he had received, that it would have been impossible for any one to have recognised him. This cruelty, however, did not move him: he stood as the beaten anvil to the stroke, and seemed to obtain fresh courage in his soul, as his bodily strength declined under the hands of his tormentors. His lower extremities were now enveloped in linen clothes, then saturated with oil, and ignited. Apphian endured this refinement in cruelty without any apparent motion, and was the only individual who appeared to be unconcerned at such tortures. The pagans were confounded, the executioners fatigued, and the brutal Governor was overcome by his undaunted fortitude; so that he was again remanded to his prison. Three days after this commitment he was once more brought before Urban, and his torments repeated, but without success; and having proved himself invincible, he was thrown into the sea.*

Shortly after the martyrdom of Apphianus, Ædesius was called to the same trial, and died as became one who preferred the truth to every other consideration. He was half-brother to the former martyr, and somewhat older than he, and had made greater progress in the liberal sciences of the day: before he embraced the Gospel, he professed himself a philosopher, and wore the habit peculiar to that character, which he retained after his conversion. He had been often called to give an account of his faith, and as frequently triumphed over the art and malice of his persecutors by his invincible constancy. He had

been too eager to show their attachment to the cause of the Redeemer in the times of persecution, than towards those who have manifested a craven spirit, and who have not shown attachment enough, or, probably, NONE AT ALL!

* "What happened immediately after this," says the historian, "would scarcely be credited by any who had not seen with his own eyes; but, notwithstanding this, we cannot but record the events. As we may say, all the inhabitants of Cæsarea were witnesses of the fact. There was no age that was not present at this wondrous sight. As soon as this blessed and holy youth was cast into the deepest parts of the sea, suddenly a roaring and uncommon crashing sound pervaded, not only the sea, but the whole surrounding heavens, so that the earth and the whole city were shaken by it; and at the same time with this wonderful and sudden shaking, the body of the martyr was cast by the sea before the gates of the city, as if unable to bear it. And such was the martyrdom of the excellent Apphianus, on the second day of the month Xanthicus, or, Roman style, the fourth of the Nones of April, on the day of the preparation, or Friday." (De Mart. Palest.)

more than once experienced the hardship of a prison, and felt the weight of chains: he had also been doomed for a limited time to labour in the mines. When he obtained his liberty he went into Egypt. Maximian Daja was Cæsar in the East, a man worthy of him who raised him to that office: he found the Governors of the provinces and other Magistrates, faithful ministers of his hatred towards the Christian name. The Governor of Alexandria * was one of the most violent at the time that Ædesius arrived: he could not endure beholding the cruelties which the Magistrate inflicted upon the faithful; but being animated with a zeal not unlike that of Apphian, he went to the Governor, and accosted him in a manner which proved that he was disposed to meet death, although it was connected with most violent torments. He reproached the Magistrate for his barbarous conduct in no measured terms: that officer was evidently thrown into considerable embarrassment; but recovering his stoical insensibility, he employed all the arts of cruelty he was master of, against this bold impugner of his proceedings, who, after being severely scourged, and otherwise cruelly tortured, was, like his brother, thrown into the sea. This martyrdom is supposed to have taken place, April 8th, 306. Ulphianus is reported to have suffered about this time, in the city of Tyre, and, after dreadful torments, and the most severe scourgings, was sewed in a raw bull's hide, together with a dog and poisonous asp, and thrown into the sea. Hence he appears deservedly to claim a place among the martyrdoms noticed with Apphianus.†

The persecution which we have now under review, found the church in the lowest state of Christian wisdom and piety. In addition to what Mr. Milner had said on the ungenerous remarks of Gibbon the historian,‡ concerning the behaviour of Ædesius, it should be observed, that amidst the great dearth of instruction in which he had learned Christianity, it is not to be wondered at, that he should know his duty so imperfectly. Milner compares the piety of him and of Apphian with that of Jephthah and of Samson; sincere, but irregular and injudicious. They lived under similar circumstances, in times of great ignorance. The Spirit of God, when he creates a new heart and a new spirit, and furnishes a man with dispositions for obedience, supersedes not the use of pastoral instruction. When this is much wanted, even divine law itself, though strong, is blind, comparatively speaking, and will mistake the rule of duty continually. It is in vain that I look out, he continues, in all this period for judicious and discreet Pastors, and for clear evangelical views. No Cyprian, no Dionysius, now appeared to check, to regulate, to control the spirits of Christians, and to discipline them by Scripture rules. This persecution found vast numbers perfidious and cowardly; some chosen

* "When he saw the Judge at Alexandria condemning the Christians there, and rioting beyond all bounds, sometimes insulting grave and decent men in various ways, sometimes consigning females of the greatest modesty, and virgins who had devoted themselves to the duties of religion, to panders, to endure every kind of abuse and obscenity, he made an attempt similar to that of his brother." (Euseb., De Mart. Palest.)

† Euseb., De Mart. Palest., cap. v.

‡ Milner's Remarks on Gibbon.

spirits, honourable and faithful unto death; but of these, many, it is to be feared, poorly informed of their duty both to God and man, and mixing with the love of Christ the intemperance and precipitation of blind self-will. The best use to be made of this observation, after teaching us to be candid to the faults of these good men, is this, that those who enjoy the advantage of better instruction and of wise Pastors, should thankfully improve their privileges, and not by the want of just subordination deprive themselves of the opportunity of exhibiting more regular and edifying examples of holiness. That knowledge was thus low among Christians, is evident from Eusebius, one of the most learned of those times, who extols a conduct in these brethren, which every Christian of common light and capacity now would condemn. The prevalence of the monastic and philosophic spirit was also apparent. Devotees were increasing in numbers among serious persons, and Origenism had made philosophy more and more reputable. Under this influence, the two brothers, whose story we have seen, imbibed too much of Platonism, knew too little of Christianity; and, though sincere enough to become martyrs of Christ, attained not the praise of Christian simplicity. The doctrines of Christ had ceased to be explicitly unfolded, and it was in sufferings chiefly, endured with patient faith and cheerful hope, that we can now see, that Christ had yet a church in the world. The bush was burning indeed, in a fire the most dreadful, yet it was not consumed.*

Constantius for many years bore the character of an exemplary Prince, and a good man. At a time when four persons shared the administration of the Roman empire,† Constantius alone adopted a course of conduct different from that pursued by his colleagues, and avowed himself the friend of the supreme God. For while they wasted the church of the Most High, levelling the structure to the ground, and obliterating the very foundations of the houses of prayer, he kept his hands free from such impiety. They polluted their provinces by the indiscriminate slaughter of holy men and women, he preserved himself from those fearful crimes: they, involved in the mazes of impious idolatry, enthralled first themselves, and then all under their authority, in bondage to the errors of evil demons, while Constantius maintained profound peace throughout his dominions, and secured to his subjects the privilege of enjoying without hinderance the worship of Almighty God. In a word, while his colleagues opposed all men by the most grievous exactions, and rendered even life burdensome to them, he governed the people with a mild and tranquil sway, and like a father to the country, he manifested towards them a truly parental and fostering care. Numberless, indeed, are the excellences of his character, which are the theme of his praise by all writers. "Of this I will," says Eusebius, "record one or two instances, as specimens of the quality of those which I must pass by in silence." ‡

In consequence of the many reports in circulation respecting this Prince, describing his kindness and gentleness of character, and the

* Milner, Hist. of the Church, cent. iv., chap. i., vol. i., p. 490.
† Diocletian, Herculeus, Galerius, and Constantius.
‡ Euseb., De Vita Constant., lib. i., cap. xiii.

extraordinary elevation of his charity, alleging, too, that by reason of his extreme indulgence to his subjects, he had not even a supply of money laid up in his treasury; the Emperor who at that time occupied the place of supreme power sent to reprehend his neglect of the public weal, at the same time reproaching him with poverty, and alleging in proof of the charge the empty state of his treasury. On this he desired the messengers of the Emperor to remain with him awhile; and calling together the wealthiest of his subjects of all nations under his dominion, he informed them that he was in want of money, and that this was a time for them all to give a voluntary proof of their affection for their Prince. As soon as they heard this, (as though they had long been desirous of an opportunity of showing the sincerity of their good-will,) with zealous alacrity they filled the treasury with gold and silver, and other wealth; each eager to surpass the rest in the amount of his subscription, and this they did with cheerful and joyous countenances. And now Constantius desired the messengers of the supreme Emperor personally to inspect his treasures, and directed them to give a faithful report of what they had seen; adding, that on the present occasion he had taken this money into his own hands, but that it had long been kept for his use in the custody of the owners, as securely as if under the charge of faithful treasurers. The ambassadors were overwhelmed with astonishment at what they had witnessed; and, on their departure, it is said that the truly generous Prince sent for the owners of the property, and, after commending them severally for their obedience and true loyalty, restored it all, and bade them return to their homes. Constantius appears to have been strongly imbued with divine truth; and the kind of death which was vouchsafed to him when he was called to exchange worlds, and how He whom he honoured made his lot to differ from that of his colleagues in the empire, will promptly be acknowledged by those who will investigate the circumstances under which he died.

After he had for some time given proof of nobility of soul, in acknowledging the Most High alone, and condemning the polytheism of the impious, and had, as it were, fortified his household by the prayers of holy men, he is said to have passed the remainder of his life in repose and tranquillity, in the enjoyment of that happiness which consists in neither molesting others, nor being molested ourselves. Accordingly, during the whole course of his quiet and peaceful reign, he dedicated his entire household, his children, his wife, and domestic attendants, to the one supreme God, so that the company assembled within the walls of his palace differed in no respect from a church of God; wherein were also to be found his Ministers, who offered continual supplications on behalf of their Prince, and this at a time when, generally speaking, it was not lawful to make any allusion, even by name, to the worshippers of God. The result which followed the abdication of Diocletian and Herculeus was, that he came into the supreme authority of the empire.* Those Princes, who were

* As soon as Diocletian and Herculeus had resigned the purple, their station, according to the rules of the new constitution, was filled by the two Cæsars, Constantius and

his superiors in respect of age, for some unknown reason resigned their authority. From that time Constantius received the honours of chief Augustus, having been previously indeed distinguished by the diadem of the Imperial Cæsars, among whom he held the first rank; but after his worth had been proved in this capacity, he was invested with the highest dignity of the Roman empire, being named "chief Augustus" of the four who were afterwards elected to that honour. Moreover, he surpassed most of the Emperors in regard to the number of his family, having gathered around him a very large circle of male and female children. And, lastly, when he had attained to a happy old age, and was about to pay the common debt of nature, and exchange this life for another, God once more manifested his power on his behalf, in providing that his eldest son Constantine should be present during his last moments, and should receive the imperial power from his hands.*

The stern temper of Galerius was cast (says the historian Gibbon) in a very different mould; and while he commanded the esteem of his subjects, he seldom condescended to solicit their affections. His fame in arms, and, above all, the success of the Persian war, had elated his haughty mind, which was naturally impatient of a superior, or even of an equal. If it were possible to rely on the partial testimony of an injudicious writer, we might ascribe the abdication of Diocletian to the menaces of Galerius, and relate the particulars of a private conversation between the two Princes, in which the former discovered as much pusillanimity as the latter displayed ingratitude and arrogance. But these obscure anecdotes are sufficiently refuted by an impartial view of the character and conduct of Diocletian. After the elevation of Constantius and Galerius to the rank of *Augusti*, two new *Cæsars* were required to supply their places, and to complete the system of the imperial Government. Diocletian was desirous of withdrawing himself from the world; he considered Galerius, who had married his daughter, as the firmest support of his family and of the empire, and he consented without reluctance that his successor should assume the merit as well as the envy of the important nomination. It was fixed without consulting the interest or inclination of the Princes of the West. Each of them had a son who had arrived at the age of manhood, and might have been deemed the most natural candidate for the vacant honour. But the impotent resentment of Herculeus was no longer to be dreaded; and the moderate Constantius, though

Galerius, who immediately assumed the title of Augustus. The honours of seniority and precedence were allowed to the former of those Princes, and he continued, under a new appellation, to administer his ancient department of Gaul, Spain, and Britain. The government of those ample provinces was sufficient to exercise his talents, and to satisfy his ambition. Clemency, temperance, and moderation distinguished the amiable character of Constantius; and his fortunate subjects had frequently occasion to compare the virtues of their Sovereign with the passions of Herculeus, and even with the arts of Diocletian. Instead of imitating their Eastern pride and magnificence, Constantius preserved the modesty of a Roman Prince. He declared, with unaffected sincerity, that his most valued treasure was in the hearts of his people; and that, whenever the dignity of the throne, or the danger of the state, required any extraordinary supply, he could depend with confidence on their gratitude and liberality. (Gibbon, Decline and Fall.)

* Euseb, De Vita Constant.

he might despise the dangers, was humanely apprehensive of the calamities, of civil war. The individuals whom Galerius appointed to the rank of Cæsar were much better suited to serve the views of his ambition; and their principal recommendation seems to have consisted in the want of merit or personal consequence. The first of these, as we have already noticed, was Daja, or, as he was afterwards called, Maximin, whose mother was the sister of Galerius.* The inexperienced youth still betrayed by his manners and language his rustic education, when, to his own astonishment, as well as that of the world, he was invested by Diocletian with the purple, exalted to the dignity of Cæsar, and intrusted with the sovereign command of Egypt and Syria. At the same time Severus, a faithful servant, addicted to pleasure, but not incapable of business, was sent to Milan, to receive from the reluctant hands of Herculeus the Cæsarian ornaments, and the possession of Italy and Africa. According to the forms of the constitution, Severus acknowledged the supremacy of the western Emperor; but he was absolutely devoted to the commands of his benefactor Galerius, who, reserving to himself the intermediate countries from the confines of Italy to those of Syria, firmly established his power over three-fourths of the monarchy. In the full confidence that the death of Constantius, whenever that event occurred, would leave him sole master of the Roman world, we are assured that he had arranged in his mind a long succession of future Princes, and that he meditated his own retreat from public life, after he should have accomplished a glorious reign of about twenty years. But within less than eighteen months two unexpected revolutions overturned the ambitious projects of Galerius.† But we must not anticipate.

It was about this time, when the severity of the persecution was in some degree abated, that a Council met at Cirta, in Numidia. The object was to elect a Bishop of that city, in the room of Paul; and Secundus, Bishop of Tigisis, presided. The church having been destroyed, the parties met in a private house, and, instead of proceeding to their business, they began to accuse each other, and about eleven or twelve of the Bishops present confessed that they had been guilty of betraying the sacred books during the persecution. In order to understand the nature of their crime, it must be remembered that, during the Diocletian persecution, an edict was promulgated ordering the destruction of the churches, and obliging the Magistrates everywhere to take from the Bishops and Priests of the church their copies

* "Then entered into the number of the Cæsars, a person whose blind heathenish superstition and cruelty were in perfect keeping with the character of Galerius, who chose him as Cæsar; namely, Caius Galerius Valerius Maximinus. It was naturally to be expected, that in the provinces assigned to him, in Syria and the adjoining parts of the Roman empire, and in Egypt, the persecutions should be renewed with vigour. At times, however, men became weary of their own violence, and as their efforts proved unavailing, the execution of the imperial edict slackened of itself, the persecution slumbered, and the Christians began to enjoy a little repose; but when their enemies perceived that they had taken breath again, their anger arose afresh, because they felt that they had been unable to extinguish Christianity, and again set up Heathenism; and then a new and more violent storm arose." (Neander.)

† Gibbon, Decline and Fall, vol. ii., p. 186. Milman edit. 8vo. 1838.

of the holy Scriptures. This edict was executed with the greatest rigour in Numidia: the Magistrates themselves entered into the churches, and into the houses of the Bishops and Clergy, to search for the Scriptures, that they might burn them, threatening with the penalty of death all who refused to discover them. Many of the Christians were content to suffer death, or any torment, rather than betray them; but there were also many, not merely among the lower order of Ecclesiastics, but also among the Priests, and even Bishops, who, through fear of death, were guilty of delivering up the sacred volumes. Such were styled *traditores*. At Cirta there were, unhappily, many Bishops and others of the Clergy, who had given a miserable example of cowardice.* Nay, the Council of Cirta appears to have been composed principally of *traditores*. And Silvanus, whom they elected Bishop of Cirta, had the same charge proved against him afterwards. Even the President himself was accused of being guilty; and the conduct of himself and the other Bishops led to results which, for a long time, were productive of serious evil to the African church. Secundus was also in communication with Mensurius, Bishop of Carthage, upon a subject which always led to much discussion after a persecution. This was the case of the martyrs. It had long been a custom, that the names of these persons should be recorded, and their memories honoured, by an annual celebration in the church to which they belonged. But when, in course of time, the number of the martyrs became very great, it was found necessary to use some selection as to the names which were to be preserved. There is some evidence that the lists were submitted by the Bishop of the diocess to the Bishop of the province for his approval. Thus Secundus, who seems to have been Primate of Numidia, wrote to Mensurius, the Bishop of Carthage, who told him that those persons ought not to be placed on the list of martyrs who had courted death voluntarily, or those who surrendered their books before any inquiry was made. It appears, from the same correspondence, that some persons had been anxious to be put into prison, either for the sake of the support which they received there from the charity of Christians, or that the credit which they gained as confessors might cause their former irregularities to be forgotten. This being the case, it was very necessary that the lists of martyrs should be submitted to some examination.†

At this period, also, the question was revived, which had been agitated so warmly in the time of Cyprian, concerning the treatment which was to be shown to the *lapsed*. At that period, the whole Christian world, with the exception of the Novatians, had agreed to act upon the same general principles; but no definite rules had been laid down for particular cases. Before the Easter of 306, Peter, Bishop of Alexandria, undertook to do this for his own diocess. The fourteen canons which he drew up are still extant; and it is pleasing to see this venerable Prelate, who had shown such fortitude himself,

* Labb. Concilia, tom. ii., p. 1518, fol. See also, Landon, Manual of Councils, p. 132. London, 1846.

† Burton, Lect. Eccles. Hist., lect. xxix.

and had been a sufferer in more than one persecution, yet acting with lenity and indulgence towards those who had been less courageous. The cases of the lapsed admitted of many variations. Some had given way immediately, without offering any resistance; others had resisted at first, and been thrown into prison, but their courage failed them afterwards. Some had consented to sacrifice at first, but they afterwards repented, and submitted to suffer torture; and in all these cases a particular period of penitence was specified, after which the parties might be admitted to communion. The case was also considered of persons who had escaped by deceiving the Magistrates, by submitting their slaves to torture instead of themselves, by paying money, or by concealing themselves; and indulgence was extended to all of them upon certain conditions. Those who had had incense put into their hands, or some meat from a sacrifice forced into their mouths, when their bodily sufferings had made them insensible, were at once admitted to communion. But if any of the Clergy had lapsed, though they might be pardoned like the rest, they could only be admitted to communion as laymen, and could never again exercise their clerical functions. The Bishop of Alexandria appears to have been less displeased than the Bishop of Carthage with those who voluntarily courted persecution; and his proceedings on this occasion are a proof, that though the churches of any one province were anxious for uniformity, they were quite at liberty to make rules for themselves, without consulting the Bishops of any other province. This is farther evident by what the Bishop of Alexandria states of it being customary in his church to keep a fast on the Wednesday and Friday before Easter, and always to make the Sunday a festival.*

It was doubtless rather earlier than this, and before the persecution had subsided, that a Council was held upon the same subject at Elvira, or Illiberis, in Spain.† It was attended by nineteen Bishops, many of whom had been confessors, and, among the rest, by Hosius, Bishop of Corduba, who seems to have suffered during some persecution about the year 296. The canons of this Council were drawn up in a tone of much greater severity than the regulations made by the Bishop of Alexandria. The latter had not excluded any case of lapse from re-admission into the church after a certain period; but the Spanish Bishops decided that some persons should never be admitted to communion, not even at their death. They were also more severe towards those who had purchased their safety by payment of money. It is plain, from all their regulations, that their great object was to prevent idolatry, to which perhaps they had seen some lurking attachment in their recent converts. With this view they prohibited the use of wax candles in the cemeteries, because they were used at heathen festivals; and paintings in churches were likewise forbidden.

* Burton, Lect. Eccles. Hist., lect. xxix.

† This Council was probably held about the year 300, but whether in Tarragona or Betica is uncertain; most probably the latter. Nineteen Bishops were present, and eighty-one strict canons were published. Amongst the Bishops was Hosius of Cordova: twenty-six Priests, and certain Deacons, also assisted. The canons appear to be a collection from the penitential canons of Africa and Spain. (Labb. Concilia, tom. i., p. 967. Landon Manual of Councils, p. 220.)

This Council is also remarkable for ordering Bishops, Presbyters, Deacons, and sub-Deacons, if they happened to be married, to live separate from their wives.*

In the meantime the Christians in the West were gradually recovering their wonted tranquillity, and had time to attend to the arrangement of their affairs: their brethren in the East, however, found themselves exposed to still more implacable enemies. Galerius knew well what he was doing when he conferred the title of Cæsar upon Daja, who was also called Maximinus or Maximin; and the latter soon exercised his newly-obtained power by enforcing the imperial edicts. There is scarcely a country in Asia in which Eusebius does not speak of some inhuman acts of cruelty having been performed. Among those who suffered for the cause of truth was Agapius: this happened in the presence of the tyrant Maximinus, who was amusing the multitude with public shows on his birth-day. It was an ancient practice when the Emperors were present to exhibit a variety of spectacles, and, for the greater novelty, to collect new and strange sights in the place of others which were more common and ordinary; including either animals from various parts of India or Ethiopia, or men who, by their dexterity, exhibited singular specimens of adroitness: but to complete the whole, as it was no less than an Emperor that exhibited the sight on the present occasion, it was thought requisite to have something even more than common. A martyr was introduced, who was led forth into the arena to endure the contest for the one and only true religion. This was Agapius: after having been paraded with malefactors from the prison to the stadium several times, and after various threatenings from the Judges, whether through compassion, or from the hope of inducing him to change his purpose, he had been deferred from time to time until now: at length, when the Emperor was present, he was led forth. He was brought into the stadium with a certain criminal, who was charged with having murdered his master. This culprit, when he was about to be cast to the beasts, was favoured with clemency and mercy from the Emperor, not unlike the manner in which Barabbas was treated in the days of our Saviour. Hence the whole theatre resounded with acclamation, that the blood-stained homicide was so humanely saved by the Emperor, and was honoured with liberty and dignity. But when Agapius was summoned into the presence of the Monarch, he was required to renounce his faith, with the promise of liberty. With a loud voice he declared, that he would cheerfully and with pleasure sustain whatever Maximin might inflict upon him; not indeed for any wickedness, but for his veneration of the God of the universe. Thus saying, he associated actions with his words, and rushing against a bear which was let loose upon him, he readily offered himself to be devoured by the beast; after which he was taken up yet breathing, and conveyed to prison. Surviving until the following day, he had stones appended to his feet, and was plunged into the sea.†

At Easter, in Cæsarea, a maiden of Tyre, Theodosia by name, not yet eighteen years of age, but distinguished for her faith and piety,

* Burton, Lect. Eccles. Hist., lect. xxix. † Euseb., De Mart. Palest., cap. vi.

approached some prisoners, confessors of Christ, who were placed before the judgment-seat, in order to comfort and encourage them: she was seized by the soldiery, as though guilty of some impious and atrocious deed, and led away to the Commander, who directed her to be tortured with dreadful and horrid cruelties; furrowing her sides and breasts with instruments even to the bones; and whilst yet breathing, and withal exhibiting a cheerful and joyous countenance, he ordered her to be thrown into the sea. Proceeding to other confessors, he consigned them all to the mines at Phœno, in Palestine. After this, Silvanus, who was a Presbyter, became a confessor, and not long after he was honoured with the episcopate, and ultimately crowned with martyrdom. The same Judge condemned those who exhibited the noblest firmness in the cause of piety to labour in the mines, having first directed their ankles to be disabled by searing with red-hot irons. At the time this sentence was pronounced, he ordered one who had rendered himself illustrious on numerous occasions of confession to be committed to the flames. This was Domninus, well known throughout Palestine for his great boldness. After which, this Magistrate, who was a terrible inventor of miseries, and peculiarly ingenious in the invention of new devices against the doctrine of Christ, planned torments against Christians such as had never before been heard of. He condemned three to pugilistic combat; but Auxentius, a grave and holy Presbyter, he commanded to be cast to the beasts; others who had reached the age of maturity, he mutilated, and then sent them to the mines; and others, after deadly tortures, he committed to prison. Among these was Pamphilus,—"that dearest of my friends and associates,"* says Eusebius, "a man who, for every virtue, was the most illustrious martyr of our times."

Pamphilus was a native of Berytus, in Phœnicia, descended from one of the most considerable families in that province: he commenced his studies in his own country, but went to complete them in the flourishing school of Alexandria. The celebrated Pierius was his master; a man of such universal learning, that he was called a second Origen. From Alexandria, Pamphilus removed to Cæsarea, in Palestine, was received into the body of the Clergy in that city, and ordained Priest.† His learning and general deportment rendered him an ornament to that church. His life was spent in the practice of Christian virtues; but his humility, contempt of the world, and diffusive charity, rendered him conspicuous. He was a true Christian

* This is the Pamphilus from whom Eusebius obtained the surname of Pamphilus.

† "Theotimus, Bishop of Cæsarea, dying, Agapius succeeded in that see, a man prudent and diligent in his charge, and of a very charitable temper; by him Pamphilus was ordained Presbyter of that church, and probably not long after Eusebius himself. Between the two commenced so strong a friendship, that Jerome says, 'they seem to have had but one soul between them.' And Eusebius, to perpetuate the remembrance of so close an amity, assumed the name of Pamphilus, a title which he carries to the present day. Besides him, he mentions another of his familiar acquaintance; Pierius, Presbyter of Alexandria, and the head of the catechetic school in that city, who had for some time been the preceptor of Pamphilus, one whose strict life and extensive learning in all faculties gained him the title of a second Origen." (Cave, Lives of the Fathers, 8vo., vol. ii., p. 96.)

philosopher, and maintained a perfect indifference alike to the miseries and happiness of this life. The study of the holy Scriptures was his favourite exercise; and, in order to promote the improvement of ecclesiastical learning, he established a library at Cæsarea, which he furnished with the best books of that kind. The utility of such an undertaking soon appeared; and we may safely say, that we owe all our acquaintance with what occurred in the first ages of Christianity to his industry, to whose collection Eusebius was greatly indebted for his Ecclesiastical History. Among the ancient authors which Pamphilus endeavoured to preserve for the use of posterity, no one engrossed more of his time and thoughts than Origen; for whose works, upon all occasions, he expressed a particular regard, and transcribed the greatest part of them with his own hand: Jerome imagined that he had found an inestimable treasure, when he recovered the twenty-five books of Commentaries on the twelve lesser Prophets, copied by Pamphilus, whose judgment and accuracy he knew he might depend upon. But the first care of Pamphilus was to see the world provided with a correct copy of the Old Testament, which had suffered much from the ignorance or negligence of transcribers since it passed through Origen's hands: in this work he had the assistance of Eusebius, who was not only united to him by the bonds of friendship, but also by a similitude of study. The application of Pamphilus was not so engrossed by his literary pursuits as to deprive the world of the advantage of being instructed at his mouth. He founded a school at Cæsarea, in imitation of that established at Alexandria, and gave lessons in divinity in that new seminary of religion and literature, until the persecution interrupted the course of his useful labours. He was apprehended in 307, and carried before Urban, the President or Governor of Palestine. The account which this officer had heard of his extraordinary merit, excited his curiosity to see him, concluding that such a man must be of great importance to whatever party he espoused, and that his example would be followed by great numbers of Christians, if he could be induced to alter his creed. The Governor first endeavoured to win him over by blandishments and insinuation; but finding him invulnerable, he tried the influence of terror. All was useless. The martyr remained fixed and unmovable, nobly rejecting his promises, and despising his threatenings, which so enraged the Governor, that he commanded him to be severely tortured; so that after they had raked his sides with their torturing *ungulæ*, and marred his flesh with hot pincers, he was sent to keep company with other Christians in prison, with a design of bringing him out again as soon as his wounds were closed.* A retributive Providence speedily pur-

* It was not all the disgrace and torment which Pamphilus endured that could fright Eusebius from his friend: he visited him in prison; and diligently ministered to his necessities, and then they mutually employed their time and pains to excellent and useful purposes. And as heretofore they had published the Greek translation of the Septuagint, taken out of Origen's Hexapla, for the use of the Palestine churches; so now they composed an elaborate Apology in defence of Origen, to vindicate him from those rude censures and reflections which the hasty and indiscreet zeal of some had made upon his memory. It is true, Jerome more than once peremptorily denies that Pamphilus either wrote this or any other book. But Eusebius, who knew best, expressly

sued Urbanus,* which deprived him of his anticipated pleasure in witnessing the execution of his barbarity: he was soon afterwards dismissed from his employ, and condemned to lose his head.

As the implacable hatred of Urbanus alone recommended him to the favour of Maximin, he took care to supply his place with another of the same disposition, whose name was Firmilianus, to whom Maximin gave strict orders to continue the persecution without the slightest relaxation. This the new Governor implicitly obeyed; and established himself in the Emperor's favour by his severity in the execution of his orders. But whether he forgot Pamphilus, or reserved him for some particular occasion, he continued in prison for two whole years, and had the satisfaction of seeing and conversing with his friends. He received frequent visits from Eusebius, who diligently aided him on all occasions. Pamphilus was again brought forth with his companions for trial. The Judge, aware of his constancy and resolution, asked whether he would comply with the request of the Emperor, and received a positive denial from himself and the confessors who were with him; sentence of death was pronounced upon them; and he, with Valens and Paul, was beheaded† on the evening of the same day that five Egyptian martyrs, his own servant and Seleucus, suffered. "When the storm had incessantly raged against us," says Eusebius, "until the sixth year, there had been before this a vast number of confessors of the true religion in what is called the Porphyry quarry, from the name of the stone which is found in Thebais. Of these, one hundred, wanting three, men, women, and young infants, were sent to the Governor of Palestine, who, for confessing the supreme Jehovah, had the ankles and sinews of their left legs burnt away with a red-hot iron. Besides this, they had the whole of the right eye cut out from the orbit, which was then seared with irons. All this was done by the order of Firmilianus, who was sent thither as successor to Urbanus, and acted in obedience to the imperial command. After this, he condemned them to the mines, to drag out a miserable existence in constant toil and oppressive labour. Nor was it enough that those who endured such miseries were de-

tells us, that it was the result of their joint endeavours; and Photius, more particularly, that the whole work consisted of six books; the five first whereof were finished by Pamphilus in prison, with Eusebius's assistance; the sixth added by Eusebius after the other's martyrdom, and that it was designed for the consolation of the martyrs who laboured in the mines, the chief of whom was Patermuthius, who was shortly after burnt at the stake. (Cave, Lives of the Fathers, vol. ii., p. 100. 8vo. edit.)

* "That man whom we but yesterday saw judging on a lofty seat, and surrounded by a guard of soldiers, and ruling over all Palestine,—the associate, favourite, and guest of the tyrant,—stripped in a single night, divested of all his honours, and covered with disgrace and infamy, before those who had courted him as the Emperor himself; him we saw timid and cowardly, uttering cries and entreaties, like a woman, before all the people whom he had ruled." (Euseb., De Mart. Palest., chap. vii.)

† In 309, Pamphilus was put to death by order of Firmilianus, the Roman President at Cæsarea. Eusebius wrote a life of Pamphilus, in three books, of which only a few fragments remain. In the second volume of the works of Hippolytus, Fabricius published what he calls, "Acta Passionis S. Pamphili Martyris, ex Libris Eusebii Cæsariensis de illius Vita, juxta M. S. Medicæum Regis Christianissimi;" but there are strong reasons for concluding that piece a forgery.

prived of their eyes, but those natives of Palestine* also, whom we have already mentioned as condemned to pugilistic fights, as they neither would suffer themselves to be supported from the imperial treasury, nor undergo the exercises preparatory to the combat, were now brought not only before the Governors, but before Maximin himself; where, displaying the noblest firmness in their confessions, by enduring hunger and stripes, they suffered finally the same as the former did, besides other confessors from the same city. Immediately after these others were seized who had assembled in the city of Gaza to hear the holy Scriptures read, some of whom suffered the same mutilations in their eyes and feet; others were obliged to endure still greater sufferings, by having their sides furrowed and scraped in a dreadful manner. Among these was one who was a female in sex, but a man in firmness, not enduring the threat of violation; and having used a certain expression against the tyrant, for committing the Government to such cruel Judges, she was first scourged, then raised on high on the rack, and lacerated on the sides. But notwithstanding those who were appointed incessantly and vehemently applied the tortures according to the orders of the Judge, another woman who, like the former, had contemplated a life of perpetual virginity, though ordinary in bodily form, and common in appearance, yet possessing a mind otherwise firm, and an understanding superior to her sex, was unable to bear the merciless, cruel, and inhuman scene before her, and, with a courage exceeding all the far-famed combatants among the Greeks for their liberty, she exclaimed against the Judge, from the midst of the crowd, 'And how long, then, will you thus cruelly torture my sister?' Firmilianus, the more bitterly incensed by this, ordered the woman immediately to be seized. She was then dragged into the midst; and after she had called herself by the august name of our Saviour, attempts were first made to bring her over to sacrifice by persuasion. But when she refused, she was dragged to the altar by force. Her sister remaining the same, and still adhering to her purpose, with a resolute, intrepid step she kicked the altar, and overturned all upon it, together with the fire. Upon this, the Judge, exasperated, like a savage beast, applied

* Euseb., De Mart. Palest., cap. viii. Eusebius himself was subjected to imprisonment during this persecution, and he has been accused of offering incense to idols to secure his release. After the martyrdom of Pamphilus, he seems to have withdrawn to Tyre, where he witnessed the persecutions of which he gives an account. He then went to Egypt, and in the course of the persecution he was seized and carried away to prison. It was here that he was said to have been guilty of that act of sinful compliance with which he has been charged. Epiphanius mentions, that at the Synod of Tyre, held 335, Potamon, a Bishop of Heraclea, in Egypt, perceiving Eusebius to be present, cried out, "How came you to sit as a Judge upon the innocent Athanasius? Who can endure it? Tell me, I pray you, were we not in prison together during the time of the persecution, where I was deprived of an eye for maintaining the truth, while you suffered nothing? How then did you get out of prison?" Epiphanius adds, that upon this Eusebius rose up and dismissed the assembly. In a letter of the Bishops of the Council of Alexandria also, it is said, that Eusebius was accused by the confessors of sacrificing to idols. It must be allowed that the dismissal of the assembly, under whatever pretence, was a suspicious circumstance. But then, on the other hand, Potamon does not positively assert that Eusebius did sacrifice; and if he really had been guilty, it is unlikely that he would so soon have been elected Bishop of Cæsarea. (Welsh, Elements of Church History.)

torture beyond all that he had done before; all but glutting himself with her very flesh, by the wounds and lacerations of her body. But when his madness was gratified to satiety, he bound her and the former, whom she called sister, together, and condemned them to the flames. The former of these was said to be of Gaza; but the other, Valentina by name, was a native of Cæsarea, and well known to many." *

After the flame of persecution had relaxed its violence amidst such heroic achievements of the noble martyrs of Christ,† and had been almost extinguished with the blood of holy men, and some relief and liberty had been granted to those condemned to labour in the mines for Christ's sake, and "we began," says Eusebius, "to breathe purer air, I know not how, but he that had received the power to persecute, was again roused by a new impulse against the Christians." Immediately, therefore, edicts were issued against them from Maximin; everywhere in the provinces,‡ Governors and the Prætorian Prefect, in proclamations and edicts, and public ordinances, urged the Magistrates and the Generals and notaries in every city to execute the imperial mandate; which ordained,—that with all speed the decayed temples of the idols should be rebuilt, and that all people, men, women, domestics, and even infants at the breast, should sacrifice and make libations; that they should be diligently made to taste of the odious sacrifices; that the things for sale in the markets should be

* Euseb., De Mart. Palest., cap. vii.

† A person named Paul being sentenced to lose his head, he begged to be allowed a short space of time. His request being granted, he prayed with a loud voice for the whole Christian world; that God would forgive them, remove the present heavy scourge of their iniquities, and restore them to peace and liberty: he then prayed for the Jews, that they might come to God, and find access to him through Christ. In the next place he prayed that the same blessings might be vouchsafed to the Samaritans. The Gentiles, who lived in error and in ignorance of God, were the next objects of his charitable petitions, that they might be brought to know and to serve him: nor did he omit to mention the crowd about him, the Judge who had sentenced him, the Emperors and the executioner, and, in the hearing of all, he prayed that their sins might not be laid to their charge. The whole company was moved, and tears were shed. The martyr composed himself to suffer, and, offering his neck to the sword, he was beheaded. An admirable Christian hero! in whom divine love breathed in conjunction with resignation and serenity. The Lord's hand was not shortened: his grace appeared in him in a manner worthy of the apostolic age. Soon after, a hundred and thirty Egyptian Chieftains, suffering the same mutilations which have been mentioned, were sentenced by Maximin to the mines of Palestine and Cilicia. (Milner, Hist. of the Church.)

‡ The persecution fell most heavily upon the most eminent of the body; upon men who were deeply pledged, by the sense of shame and honour, even if, in any case, the nobler motives of conscientious faith and courageous confidence in the truth of the religion were wanting, to bear with unyielding heroism the utmost barbarities of the persecutor. Those who submitted performed the hated ceremony with visible reluctance, with trembling hand, averted countenance, and deep remorse of heart: those who resisted to death were animated by the presence of multitudes, who, if they dared not applaud, could scarcely conceal their admiration; women crowded to kiss the hems of their garments; and their scattered ashes, or unburied bones, were stolen away by the devout zeal of their adherents, and already began to be treasured as incentives to faith and piety. It cannot be supposed that the great functionaries of the state, the civil or military Governors, could be so universally seared to humanity, or so incapable of admiring these frequent examples of patient heroism, as not either to mitigate, in some degree, the sufferings which they were bound to inflict, or even to feel some secret sympathy with the blameless victims whom they condemned, which might ripen, at a more fortunate period, into sentiments still more favourable to the Christian cause. (Milman.)

defiled with the libations of victims, and that before the baths guards should be stationed, who should pollute those that had been cleansed in them with their execrable sacrifices. These atrocities having been committed, many of the Heathen bitterly censured their severity and absurd character, not only as oppressive and overbearing, but superfluous, especially when they beheld an ugly storm gathering around themselves. However, the great Head of the church infused courage and confidence into his wrestlers that, without being drawn or even encouraged by any one, they voluntarily trampled upon the threatenings of such opponents. Three of the Christians associated, and rushed upon the Governor as he was offering sacrifice, and called upon him to desist, for there was no other God but one, the supreme Jehovah and Creator of the universe. On being interrogated who and what they were, they boldly confessed that they were Christians. Firmilianus enraged, and without inflicting any torture upon the offenders, condemned them to capital punishment. Of these one was named Antoninus, a Presbyter; the second was called Zebina, a native of Eleutheropolis; and the third was known by the name of Germanus. They were all executed on the thirteenth day of the month Dius,* on the ides of November. On the same day, Eunathas, a woman of Scythopolis, ennobled also by the virgin's fillet, was added to that number. She had not, indeed, gone the same length as the former three, but was dragged by force, and brought before the Judge; she was scourged, and endured dreadful abuse, which was heaped upon her by Maxys, the Tribune of a neighbouring district, and without any authority from a higher power: he was a sanguinary character, exceedingly harsh and inflexible, and in his general deportment so fierce and violent, that he was in the bad repute of all that knew him. Having denuded Eunathas of her clothes, so as to leave only her body covered from her loins to her feet, he caused her to be led about the city of Cæsarea, beaten with thongs of hide. After all these cruelties, which she bore with the greatest firmness, she exhibited the same cheerful alacrity when before Firmilianus himself, where she was condemned to the flames. Whilst aiming his cruelty and madness against the worshippers of the Most High, he overstepped the dictates of nature, and denied the lifeless bodies of these martyrs a place of sepulture. Night and day he commanded their mangled remains to be watched, as they lay exposed in the open air, the food of any beasts of prey: no small number of men were present several days, who attended to witness the execution of this savage and barbarous decree; some, indeed, were actually seen peering from behind their

* Three other Bishops are supposed to have suffered about this period, namely, Hesychius, Pachymius, and Theodorus; the first of whom was a man of considerable note, if he were the Hesychius who published an edition of the Septuagint. Origen's great work had now been before the world for more than half a century, and it contained the fullest materials for settling the Greek text. The copies, however, still continued very different, and Hesychius undertook a revision of it, which obtained general circulation in the diocess of Alexandria. If he were the Bishop who suffered martyrdom, his edition of the Septuagint probably appeared at the end of the third century. (Burton's Lectures.)

post of observation, as though it were considered meritorious to watch that the lifeless carcasses were not stolen. Wild beasts, dogs, and carnivorous birds, scattered human limbs in every direction; and the whole city round about was deluged, so that nothing appeared more dreadful or horrific, even to those who had been most hostile to the church, not so much lamenting the calamity of those against whom such things were perpetrated, as the nuisance against themselves, and the indignity offered to our common nature.*

Others also in the East received the martyrs' crown. On the fourteenth of the month Apellæus, that is, the nineteenth of the calends of January, some from Egypt were seized by the spies appointed to observe those who went out at the gates. They had been sent for the purpose of ministering to the necessities of the confessors in Cilicia. These experienced the same lot as those whom they came to serve, and were mutilated in their eyes and feet. Three of them, however, exhibited wonderful fortitude at Ascalon, where they were imprisoned, and bore away different prizes of martyrdom. One of them, named Ares, was committed to the flames; the others, Promus and Elias, were beheaded. On the eleventh of the month Audynæus, which is the third of the ides of January, in the same city of Cæsarea, Petrus Ascetes,† also called Apselamus, from the village of Anea, on the borders of Eleutheropolis, like the purest gold, with a noble resolution, gave the proof of his faith in the Christ of God. Disregarding both the Judge and those around him, who besought him in many ways only to have compassion on himself, and to spare his youth and blooming years, he preferred his hope in the one supreme God to all, and even to life itself. With him also was said to be a certain Bishop, named Asclepius, a follower of Marcion's error, with a zeal for piety, as he supposed, but not according to knowledge. He departed this life on the same funeral pile.‡

Somewhat earlier than the present date, we have an account of the martyrdom of Pantaleon, recognised also by the Greeks by the name of Pantelemon, a name signifying, "full of compassion:" he was a native of Nicomedia, in Bithynia, was blessed in having a Christian mother, who instructed him in youth in the religion of Christ, but of whom he was in early life deprived by death. His father, on whom the responsibility of his education now entirely devolved, was a Pagan, and placed his son in a situation where he could study the

* After the perpetration of these atrocities, "a strange event," says Eusebius, "took place. The air happened to be clear and bright, and the aspect of the whole heavens was most serene. Then, suddenly, from the greater part of the columns that supported the public porticoes, issued drops like tears; and the market-places and streets, though there was no moisture from the air, I know not whence it came, were sprinkled with water and became wet: so that it was immediately spread abroad among all, that in an unaccountable manner the earth wept, not being able to endure the extreme impiety of those deeds, and, to address a reproof to men of a relentless and callous nature, the very stones and senseless matter could bewail these facts. I well know that these accounts may, perhaps, appear an idle tale and a fable to posterity; but it was not so to those who had its truth confirmed by their presence at the time." (De Mart. Palest.)

† Peter, called the Ascetic, probably from the extraordinary severity of life and self-denial that he exhibited at an early age.

‡ Euseb., De Mart. Palest., cap. x.

learning of the times, in which he made such progress, that in a few years he became one of the most eminent Physicians of the age. Galerius, who, on the resignation of Diocletian, raised himself to the imperial throne in the East, kept his court at Nicomedia, and installed Pantaleon in the office of Physician to his court and household. The corruptions of such a court would, doubtless, easily have effaced whatever impression his mother's instructions had made upon his mind, had not Almighty God beheld him with compassion, and in his providence directed him to one Hermolaus, a venerable old man, and a sincere Christian, who undertook to instruct him in the way of God more perfectly: this he accomplished with such success, that Pantaleon soon became one of the warmest assertors and defenders of the truth as it is in Jesus. The church in Nicomedia was still suffering under the persecution which commenced in that city in the year 303, and even now raged in that place more fiercely than in other parts of the empire. The situation and profession of Pantaleon did not afford him opportunity to adopt the same measures for his personal security as those of others: therefore, finding himself exposed to the public gaze as a Christian, he began to prepare for martyrdom by the exercise of those duties which placed the religion he professed in such an advantageous light, as caused numbers to embrace it. The reputation which he acquired, through the blessing of God attending his prescriptions, roused the envy and jealousy of the pagan Physicians, who at once began to plot his destruction. An opportunity soon presented; for it was by no means difficult to find ways of effecting their purpose, when Christianity was so odious to the powers who governed that part of the world. His adversaries complained of his proceedings to Galerius, and assured him that it was in vain to anticipate the extirpation of Christianity from out of the imperial city, so long as Pantaleon was suffered to corrupt the minds of the people, and to make such a number of proselytes. The Emperor was surprised to hear that he harboured an enemy to the gods in his own court, resolved to know the truth, and had the mortification of being convinced that he had not been misinformed. Galerius omitted no means by which he hoped to induce Pantaleon to embrace the worship of the pagan deities; but finding him invincible to threatenings or promises, he ordered him first to be tortured, and afterwards beheaded.* The venerable Hermolaus, who instructed Pantaleon in the faith, was dragged from his retreat, and in the same manner glorified God.

Sufficient has now been related, to adopt the language of a modern writer, of the early persecution of the Christians, to make the reader acquainted with the most striking circumstances by which that dark series of events was distinguished. The principal points to which we would direct his attention, in reflecting on the narratives which have been given, are those that distinguished these persecutions of Christi-

* Alban Butler very sagely informs us, that the relics of Pantaleon were translated to Constantinople, and there preserved with much honour. The greater part of them are now shown in the abbey of St. Denys, near Paris; but his head is at Lyons. *Credat Judæus Apella.*

anity from other religious persecutions, either of an earlier or a later date. The primitive Christians were, it is probable, the first people in the world that ever suffered from religious motives, wholly unmixed with any of a different nature. There appears the strongest reason for believing that, in the convulsions of the ancient world, the struggles which took place were conflicts between liberty and slavery, who set up their standards at the same time that hostile religions disputed with each other for empire.* Even in the persecution which the Jews suffered under Antiochus Epiphanes, something of this kind may be discovered. The Syrian was an invader and a political tyrant, as well as a persecutor; and the Jews were at least as proud of their superiority as a nation as they were zealous for the observance of their religious rites. Scarcely, however, had the sufferers been made to feel the hand of the oppressor, when they rose unanimously, and resisted the sword with the sword; triumphing by that fierce and stern vigour which, when force is to be opposed by force, can only be supplied by the impulse of a national spirit. But the Christians of the first three centuries had no motive of this kind either for acting or suffering: the seed of their fortitude was in their souls, and the plant which sprang from it had no nurture but what it received from heaven. Other seed was here and there mixed with the former, and the dew of blessing was sometimes dissipated as it fell on hot and intemperate hearts; but, as a people, the early sufferers for Christianity had no reasons for their conduct but those which were established on that precept of their Scriptures, that by resigning this life for the sake of truth, they should gain one of eternal continuance. Submission to the reigning powers was a duty, to which they had been exhorted both by their heavenly Master and his inspired Apostles; and they could, therefore, never feel themselves agitated by the passions which usually incite to resistance: the only part they could lawfully take in the politics of their age was to pray that they might be peaceably and quietly governed. The medium of their sentiments on such subjects was to be a prayer for all in authority; and the only weapons with which they were to contend against the power and tyranny of persecuting rulers and unjust judges were the words, and, more frequently, only the manifestations, of holiness and resignation which they were taught by the divine Spirit.†

* The spirit of severity towards erroneous persons, in whomsoever it is found, is opposed to the calm temper of Christianity, as intimated in the reply of Christ to his disciples, "Ye know not what spirit ye are of;" that is, "Ye do not well consider under what dispensation ye were placed by me. The way I come to teach men, the temper, disposition, and affection I would fix within them, is not a furious, persecuting, and destructive spirit, but mild and gentle and tender of the lives and interests of men, even of those who are our greatest enemies." Under the Old-Testament dispensation, they who rejected and scoffed at a Prophet, suffered severely for it; the Prophet had commission to call for fire from heaven to devour them presently, and to curse them in the name of the Lord. But they who reject and crucify Christ, are by him prayed for, and are, by his command, still to be preached unto, and if possible brought to repentance: and according to this example all Christians are to conform themselves, acting towards despisers of their persons, or rejectors of their doctrines, not according to the legal, but the evangelical, dispensation; not according to the severity of Elias, but the meekness and gentleness of Christ. (Dr. Hammond.)

† It is not easy to add anything of moment to the conclusions of Jeremy Taylor:—"It is one of the glories of Christianity, that it came in upon the world with no other

This humility and peaceableness of disposition constituted a part of their religious profession, and the situation in which they stood rendered the exercise of these virtues constantly necessary. They were opposed, in their belief, to all the nations of the earth; but few as they were in number, and contradictory as was their creed to that of all other men, it was the open and professed object of their lives to convert the world to their faith. Had they been of a turbulent disposition, had they been less meek in their sentiments and appearance, the hostility which was provoked by their refusal to comply with established customs, would have given birth to conflicts in which not some few distinguished members of the society would have died, setting an example of fortitude to the rest, but the whole body would have been cut off; fortitude and resignation blunting the edge of the sharpest sword, while pride and an active valour add continually to its keenness. However useful, therefore, the latter qualities may be to a people when contending with enemies to whom their physical force bears some proportion, it is on the careful cultivation of the former that the members of a new sect must depend for their only chance of success; and thus the spirit and the maxims of Christianity required an implicit conformity of disposition in those who professed the religion, not only for their own excellency, but for the power which such a conformity would give to whatever means were employed for the diffusion of the faith.* "Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword," was the exhortation of the Saviour; intimating, that it was not by the boldness which gives success to other enterprises that his cause was to be advocated, but by an imitation of his own meekness and resignation. How well these directions were followed in numerous instances, has been seen. The refusal to recognise any other God but one, was the sole cause why the persecuted Christians stood opposed to their rulers; they had no object in view by their labours but the instruction of their countrymen in the sublime truths of their faith; they had no interests, as the members of a state, separate from the rest of the citizens. The doctrines which they preached had a direct ten-

force but that of reason and demonstration of the Spirit; that towards the persons of men it was always full of meekness, charity, compliance, toleration, condescension, and forbearance, restoring persons overtaken with an error in the spirit of meekness. Now things are best preserved by that which gives them their first being, and which agrees best with their temper and constitution; and it would be a mighty disparagement to so glorious an institution, that in its principle it should be merciful and humane, and in the propagation of it so inhuman; and it would be improbable and unreasonable, that the sword should be used in the persuasion of one proposition, and yet in the persuasion of the whole nothing like it. To do so may serve the end of a temporal Prince, but will never promote the honour of Christ's kingdom." (Liberty of Prophesying.)

* It was a principle which generally obtained among Christians till the days of Constantine, and afterwards continued to be maintained by several fathers of the church, "that men were to be left to their freedom in matters of religion, and not to be compelled by outward punishments to the profession of it." Tertullian says, "This is the natural right of all men, to worship what they think fit. It is no business of religion to compel men to religion; for that," he says, "must be embraced willingly, and not by force. Consider," he says, "whether this do not add to your irreligion, to forbid the freedom of religion, and interdict the choice of a Deity, that I may not worship whom I will, but must be compelled to worship whom I would not." (Tertull., ad. Scap., cap. ii.; Apolog., cap. xxiv.)

dency to make them satisfied and peaceable under whatever form of government they lived; and the precepts by which they professed to be guided were positive in enjoining the utmost forbearance and charity towards erring and unenlightened men. With such feelings, the early Christians could provoke neither jealousy nor fear on the part of their opponents; for they gave no signs of ambition, were too meek to engage in treasons, too pure in their morals to afford any dangerous example, and were too intently engaged on one subject to form any alliance with the disaffected, or the broachers of any other system. As the religion for which these single-hearted and heroic men suffered became more extensively known in the world, and, under the protection of the great and powerful, was rendered respectable in the eyes of those who had no conception of its real, internal excellence, a different race of Christians grew up; and the motives which induced men to bear the name became complicated and indirect. Interest and custom were thenceforward more frequently the parents of belief than either reason or openness of heart; and faith thus sitting so loosely on the conscience, it was found necessary to define what was to be believed with more exactness, and to remind the careless professor of his creed by appeals to his outward senses.* In the invention or support of a system which answered the purpose of defining matters of belief, so that they might be assented to, or understood, by those who were too indolent or too gross-minded to receive them unless so propounded, differences of sentiment would, it is easy to see, often arise, both among those who first produced the systems, and those by whom they were afterwards to be supported. The doctrines of Christianity being thus mixed with something human, and men being for the most part more ready to look with interest on what is human than on what is divine, a variety of new objects would demand their attention and reverence; and names unknown to their fathers in the faith would be adopted, and not unfrequently preferred, to the simple appellation of Christian. The chances of disagreement being multiplied, persecution also would see new opportunities for unsheathing her sword; and in the course of the struggles which ensued, the fierceness of the conflict was more owing to zeal for particular names than for the holiest of doctrines; a circumstance nowhere

* "The Epistles of the Arians," says Hilary, "what do they, but deprecate the liberty of faith, and ask for bonds and prisons, and tribunals, and all that is pernicious? whereas, the Almighty rather taught, than exacted, the knowledge of himself; and learning the authority of his commands by the works of his power, despised all compelled confessions of himself. If such force be used to compel your faith," he said to the Arians, "the episcopal doctrine would oppose it, and would say, God is the God of the whole world, and needs no compelled obedience, nor requires any such confession of Him; he is not to be deceived, but well pleased. God is to be sought with simplicity, learnt by confession, loved by charity, worshipped by fear, retained by probity of will: whence is it, therefore, that Priests are compelled by bands, and commanded by punishment, to fear God; that they are imprisoned, &c.? Therefore do ye labour and rule the commonwealth with salutary counsels," saith he to the Emperor, "that all under your government may enjoy the sweetest liberty; there is no other way to compose our troubles; let thy lenity permit the people to hear them teaching whom they would hear, whom they think meet, whom they choose." (Hilar., Lib. ad Constant. August.)

apparent in the contest which the primitive Christians endured with Paganism.*

No eloquence can do justice to the fortitude of the faithful who suffered in Phrygia, Antioch, Pontus, and in the neighbouring places. Free leave was given to any to injure them, by beating them with clubs or rods, with thongs of leather, or with ropes. Some, having their hands tied behind them, were suspended on the rack, and every limb of their bodies stretched by some rude, but complicated, machinery. The tormentors rent their whole bodies with iron nails, which were applied, not only to the sides, as in the case of murderers, but also to the belly, legs, and cheeks; others were suspended by one hand to the portico, and underwent the most severe distention of all their joints; others were bound to pillars, face to face, their feet being raised above the ground, that their bonds, being elongated by the weight of their bodies, might be the closer drawn together: and this they endured almost a whole day without intermission. The Governor ordered them to be bound with the greatest severity, and, when they breathed their last, to be dragged on the ground. "No care," said he, "ought to be taken of these Christians: let all treat them as unworthy of the name of men." Some expired under their tortures; others, having been recovered by methods taken to heal them, and being reduced to the alternative of sacrificing or dying, cheerfully preferred the latter. For they knew what was written, "Whosoever sacrificeth to other gods, shall be destroyed;" and, "Thou shalt have none other gods but me." Such were the words of a martyr, a true lover of wisdom and of God, which, previous to the definitive sentence of his execution, he sent to the brethren of his church. One city in Phrygia,† being generally Christian, was besieged by armed men, and set on fire. The men, with their wives and children, were burnt to death, calling upon Christ, the God over all. All the inhabitants,‡ Magistrates and people, nobles and plebeians, professing Christianity, were ordered to sacrifice, and, for refusing, suffered in this manner.§

* Stebbing, History of the Christian Church, vol. i., p. 129. The excuse which the Heathens offered for their cruelty against the Christians, was, that they thus punished the Christians to revenge the injuries inflicted by their faith and doctrines upon their gods. This, the ancient father says, is a ridiculous and absurd mode of procedure: they ought rather to leave the sacrilegious and impious transgressors of their law, to the vengeance of their gods. "If your deities have any power," says Cyprian, "let them rise up and vindicate themselves, and by their majesty defend themselves: for what can they do for those who worship them, who are unable to defend themselves against the impugners of their authority, and even existence?" (Cypr. ad Demet., cap. xii.) "Is it so," saith Arnobius, "that the gods desire the protection of men? Are they not able, without your defence, to vindicate themselves, and repel the calumnies of us Christians?" (Arnob., lib. i.) "When the Heathens punish the sacrilegious," says Lactantius, "they distrust the power of their gods; for if they think they can do anything, why do they not leave them to execute their own vengeance on the offenders?" (Lactant., Div. Institut., lib. ii., cap. 4.)

† Euseb., Hist. Eccles., lib. viii., cap. 11.

‡ Gibbon observes, that there was an important circumstance which has been noticed by Ruffinus, the Latin translator of Eusebius, that the gates were opened to permit them to depart if they pleased. The remark is worthy of his own malignity. Is it to be supposed that this permission was unconditional? Eusebius informs us, that it was expected from them all that they should sacrifice.

§ Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. viii., cap. 11.

One Adauctus, a Christian of the highest dignity, who held at that time an office of great importance, was honoured also with the crown of martyrdom. Some were slain by axes, as in Arabia; some by breaking the legs, as in Cappadocia; some, suspended by their feet with the head downward over a slow fire, were suffocated, as in Mesopotamia; some were mutilated and cut in pieces, as at Alexandria; some, to avoid falling into the hands of their enemies, committed suicide, by precipitating themselves from the tops of houses. Lamentable instances of impatience! But the reader will remember, that the decline had been very great from Christian purity: that so many should suffer like Christians in so dull a time, can scarcely be accounted for, but on the idea of the Lord's reviving his work, and ministering the Holy Spirit amidst their afflictions. We cannot commend the conduct of a lady of Antioch, or that of her two daughters, who, to avoid the licentious brutality of the soldiers, drowned themselves. Two others in the city of Antioch, persons of quality, and of great piety, died in a much more Christian manner, being thrown into the sea by the persecutors. As infidel writers have taken pains to depreciate the authenticity of these facts, it has been thought proper to give a just picture of them from Eusebius. In addition to what has been adduced from Lactantius, and ancient memorials, it may with justice be said, in favour of the credibility of the writer, whose character as a historian of veracity is before us, that he is large and circumstantial in scenes of which he was a spectator; succinct and general, where he had no opportunity of knowing the circumstances. Of the martyrs of Palestine, his own country, he has given us a copious narrative, a specimen of which has already been delivered, containing those whose martyrdom fell within the period of Diocletian's reign. The rest must be considered hereafter. Procopius * was the first of those martyrs who, being brought before the tribunal, and ordered to sacrifice to the gods, declared, that he knew only one God, to whom he ought to sacrifice in the manner which he has appointed. Being then ordered to make libations to the four Emperors, he repeated a verse of Homer, which by no means pleased the persecutors, as implying a censure of the present government. Upon this he was beheaded immediately. Whether the empire was benefited by the appointment of four Emperors instead of one, is a question of politics, which it certainly became not the martyr to enter upon, especially on that occasion. And it is the only instance of deviation into secular matters, which we remember to have seen in primitive Christians, as yet. It might be only a sally of imprudent vivacity; but even so, it was extremely ill-timed. Galerius, in whose dominions he said this, would probably hear of it; and this fiercest of all the persecutors needed not the addition of such an incentive, to inflame his wrath against the Christians.†

* Procopius, after his conversion, brake his images of silver and gold, and distributed the same to the poor; and after all kinds of torments, of racking, of cording, of tearing his flesh, of goring, stabbing, and firing, at length had his head smitten off. (Foxe, Acts and Monuments.)

† Milner, History of the Church, cent. iv., chap. i., vol. i., p. 482.

The continued separation of the Pastors from their respective flocks, was attended with a serious evil, independent of their personal sufferings: unhappily, it furnished occasion for a schism, which continued to exist for a long period in the Alexandrian church. Meletius, Bishop of Lycopolis, taking advantage of the absence of Peter and the other Bishops, took upon himself to make regulations which no persons but the Bishops of the diocess had authority to do. Provision had been made for the spiritual wants of the Christians; but Meletius was determined to interfere, and even went so far as to ordain some persons for the ministry. An account of these proceedings soon reached the Bishops who were imprisoned at Alexandria; and the following, Hesychius, Pachymius, Theodorus, and Phileas, addressed a joint epistle to Meletius, expostulating with him on the irregularity of his conduct. This letter is still extant;* and we learn from it, that it was contrary to all custom for one Bishop to ordain in the diocess of another; and it also shows, that these Bishops looked up to Peter, as exercising over them a kind of metropolitan authority.† Meletius paid no attention to this remonstrance; but when the authors of it had closed their career by martyrdom, he went to Alexandria, and continued there the same irregular proceedings. Two persons supported him in his ambitious views: one of them was Isidorus, the other Arius,‡ who afterwards became so celebrated for his heretical tenets; and by the assistance of these men, Meletius was able to draw after him some of the Presbyters, who were left by Peter in charge of the Alexandrian church. Being now at the head of a party, he visited the confessors, who were in the prison or in the mines; and two of them received ordination from his hands.§ When Peter heard of this open infringement of his rights, he wrote from his place of concealment to his flock at Alexandria, telling them not to hold communion with Meletius, but to wait till he could return and investigate the affair. The time of his re-visiting Alexandria is uncertain; but since the persecution was continued in Egypt, and with still greater fury, for the four or five following years, it is most probable that he did not quit his concealment till after the death of Galerius in 311. There is evidence that Meletius himself was a sufferer in these scenes of cruelty. He was accused of having purchased his safety by consenting to sacrifice; but he probably lay for some time in prison before he took this step: and for the present his schismatical conduct was checked, though he found ample opportunity to resume it afterwards.‖

* It was first published by Maffei; (Osservazioni Letterarie, vol. ii., p. 11—18;) and by Routh. (Reliq. Sacr., vol. iii., p. 381. Oxon. 1815.)

† Epiphanius mentions Egypt, and the Thebaid, Libya, Ammonia, Marœotis, and Pentapolis, being under the Bishop (or, as he was then called, the Archbishop) of Alexandria. (Hæres. lxviii., cap. 1.)

‡ Socrat., Eccles. Hist., lib. i., cap. 15.

§ This is also confirmed by Sozom., lib. i., cap. 24. A very different origin of the Meletian schism is given by Epiphanius; (Heræs. lxviii.;) but it is much safer to follow Athanasius, Socrates, and Sozomen. Pagi places the origin of this heresy in 301; ad Baron., Ann. 306, §. xxix.

‖ Burton, Lect. Eccles. Hist., lect. xxix.

At Cirta * in Numidia, Paul, the Bishop, ordered a Sub-Deacon to deliver up the treasures of the church to a Roman officer. The Holy Scriptures, and the moveables of this society of Christians, were surrendered by the perfidy or cowardice of those who ought to have protected them. But the Most High reserved some who were endowed with courage and zeal, at the hazard of their lives, to take care of the sacred writings, and baffle the intention of the persecutors, which, doubtless, was to destroy all records of Christianity among men. Felix of Tibiura,† in Africa, being asked to deliver up the Scriptures, answered, "I have them, but will not part with them." He was condemned to be beheaded. "I thank thee, O Lord," says this honest martyr, "that I have lived fifty-six years, have preserved the Gospel, and have preached faith and truth. O my Lord Jesus Christ, the God of heaven and earth, I bow my head to be sacrificed to thee, who livest to all eternity." It is not judged amiss to distinguish this man in the narrative. The preservation of civil liberty is valuable, and the names of men who have suffered for it with integrity are recorded with honour. But how much below the name of Felix of Tibiura should these be accounted! He is one of those heroes who have preserved to us the precious word of God itself. In Abitina, in Africa, forty-nine manfully perished through hunger and ill-treatment. In Sicily,‡ Euplius, a martyr, being asked, "Why do you keep the Scriptures, forbidden by the Emperors?" answered, "Because I am a Christian. Life eternal is in them. He that gives them up loses life eternal." Let his name be remembered with honour, together with that of Felix: he suffered also in the same cause, in company with various other martyrs in Italy.§

In the midst of the confusion which now prevailed throughout the empire, the eyes of all were turned toward Constantine, the elder son of Constantius. If not already recognised by the prophetic glance of devout hope as the first Christian Sovereign of Rome, he seemed placed by providential wisdom as the protector and head of the Christian interest. The enemies of Christianity were his; and if he were not, as yet, bound by the hereditary attachment of a son to the religion of his mother Helena, his father would bequeath him the wise example of wisdom and moderation.‖ The place of his birth, as well as the condition of his mother Helena, has been the subject, not only of literary, but of national, dispute. Notwithstanding the recent tradition which assigns for her father a British King, we are obliged to confess, says Gibbon, that Helena was the daughter of an innkeeper; but, at the same time, we may defend the legality of her marriage, against those who have represented her as the concubine ¶ of Constantius. The great Constantine was, most probably, born at Naissus, in Dacia; and it is not surprising, that in a family and

* Gesta apud Zenoph., in Routh, Relig. Sacræ, vol. iv., p. 101. Oxon. 1815.
† Ruinart, Acta Sincera Martyr., p. 313.
‡ Ibid., p. 361.
§ Milner, History of the Church, vol. i., p. 488.
‖ Milman, History of Christianity, vol. ii., p. 282.
¶ By insisting on the divorce of Helena, Diocletian acknowledged the validity of her marriage.

province distinguished only by the profession of arms, the youth should discover very little inclination to improve his mind by the acquisition of knowledge. He was about eighteen years of age when his father was promoted to the rank of Cæsar; but that fortunate event was attended with his mother's divorce; and the splendour of an imperial alliance reduced the son of Helena to a state of disgrace and humiliation.* Instead of following Constantius in the West, he remained in the service of Diocletian, signalized his valour in the wars of Egypt and Persia, and gradually rose to the honourable station of a Tribune of the first order. The figure of Constantine was tall and majestic; he was dexterous in all his exercises, intrepid in war, affable in peace; in his whole conduct, the active spirit of youth was tempered by habitual prudence; and while his mind was engrossed by ambition, he appeared cold and insensible to the allurements of pleasure.† Constantius became exceedingly ill, and wrote to Galerius requesting that his son Constantine might be sent to see him. He had made a similar proposal long before, but in vain: for Galerius meant nothing less than to grant it; on the contrary, he laid repeated snares for the life of that young man. He durst not use open violence, lest he should stir up civil wars against himself, and incur that which he most dreaded, the hate and resentment of the army. Under pretence of manly exercise and recreation, he made him combat with wild beasts; but this device was frustrated: for the power of God protected Constantine, and, in the very moment of jeopardy, rescued him from the hands of his pretended friend. At length, Galerius, when he could no longer avoid complying with the request of Constantius, one evening gave Constantine a warrant to depart, and commanded him to set out the following morning with the imperial despatches. Galerius meant to find either some pretext for detaining Constantine, or to forward instructions to Severus for arresting him on the road. Constantine discovered his object; and, therefore, after supper, when the Emperor was gone to rest, he hasted away, carried off from the principal stages all the horses maintained at the public expense, and escaped. Next day the Emperor, having purposely remained in his bed-chamber until noon, ordered Constantine to be called into his presence; but he learnt that the Prince had set out immediately after supper.‡ Outrageous with passion, he ordered horses to be made ready, that Constantine might be pursued, and dragged back; and hearing that all the horses had been carried off from the main road, he could scarcely refrain from tears.§ In the mean time Constantine,

* The tradition which raises Helena to the rank of King's daughter, was unknown to the contemporaries of Constantine, was invented in the darkness of monasteries, was embellished by Geoffrey of Monmouth, and the writers of the twelfth century, has been defended by our antiquarians of the last century, and is seriously related in the ponderous History of England, compiled by Mr. Carte. (Vol. i., p. 147, fol. Lond. 1747.) He transports, however, the kingdom of Coil, the imaginary father of Helena, from Essex, to the wall of Antoninus.

† Gibbon, Decline and Fall, &c., vol. ii., p. 188. 8vo. edit.

‡ Zosimus tells a very foolish story, that Constantine caused all the post-horses which he had used to be hamstrung. Such a bloody execution, without preventing a pursuit, would have scattered suspicions, and might have stopped his journey. (Lib. ii., pp. 78, 79. 8vo. Oxon., 1679.)

§ Lactant., De Mort. Persec., cap. xxiv.; Euseb., De Vita Constant., lib. i., cap. xxi.

travelling with incredible rapidity, reached his father before he expired. He ended his life in the imperial palace of York, fifteen months after he had received the title of Augustus, and almost fourteen years and a half after he had been promoted to the rank of Cæsar.

The death of Constantius was succeeded by the elevation of Constantine. The ideas of succession and inheritance are so very familiar, that the generality of mankind consider them as founded, not only in reason, but in nature itself. Our imagination readily transfers the same principles from private property to public dominion; and whenever a virtuous father leaves behind him a son, whose merit seems to justify the esteem, or even the hopes, of the people, the joint influence of prejudice and of affection operates with irresistible weight. The flower of the Western armies had followed Constantius into Britain, and the national troops were reinforced by a numerous body of Alemanni, who obeyed the orders of Crocus, one of their hereditary Chieftains. The opinion of their own importance, and the assurance that Britain, Gaul, and Spain would acquiesce in their nomination, were diligently inculcated to the legions by the adherents of Constantine. The soldiers were asked, whether they could hesitate a moment between the honour of placing at their head the worthy son of their beloved Emperor, and the ignominy of tamely expecting the arrival of some obscure stranger, on whom it might please the Sovereign of Asia to bestow the armies and provinces of the West? It was insinuated to them, that gratitude and liberality held a distinguished place among the virtues of Constantine; nor did that Prince show himself to the troops, till they were prepared to salute him with the names of Augustus and Emperor. The throne was the object of his desire; and had he been less actuated by ambition, it was his only means of safety.* He was well acquainted with the character and sentiments of Galerius, and sufficiently apprized, that if he wished to live, he must determine to reign. The decent, and even obstinate, resistance which he offered to the soldiery, was in character with his general conduct; and he did not yield to the acclamations of the army, until he had provided the proper materials for a letter, which he immediately despatched to the Emperor of the East. Constantine informed him of the melancholy event of his father's death, modestly asserted his natural claim to the succession, and respectfully lamented, that the affectionate violence of his troops had not permitted him to solicit the imperial purple in the regular and constitutional manner. The first emotions of Galerius were those of surprise, disappointment, and rage; and, as he could seldom restrain his passions, he loudly threatened, that he would commit to the flames both the letter and the messenger. But his resentment insensibly subsided; and when he recollected the doubtful chance of war, when he had weighed the character and strength of his adversary, he consented to embrace the honourable accommodation which the prudence of Constantine had

* The panegyrist of Constantine, Eumenius, ventures to affirm, in the presence of Constantine, that he put spurs to his horse, and tried, but in vain, to escape from the hands of the soldiers. (Lib. vii., cap. 8. Vid. Delph. Class. Varior. Not., No. 122.)

opened to him. Without either condemning or ratifying the choice of the British army, Galerius accepted the son of his deceased colleague, as the Sovereign of the provinces beyond the Alps; but he gave him only the title of Cæsar, and the fourth rank among the Roman Princes, whilst he conferred the vacant place of Augustus on his favourite Severus. The apparent harmony of the empire was still preserved; and Constantine, who already possessed the substance, expected without impatience an opportunity of obtaining the honours, of supreme power.* The children of Constantius, by his second marriage, were six in number, three of either sex; and their imperial descent might have solicited a preference over the meaner extraction of the son of Helena. But Constantine was in the thirty-second year of his age, in the full vigour both of mind and body, at the time when the eldest of his brothers could not possibly be more than thirteen years old. His claim of superior merit had been allowed and ratified by the dying Emperor. In his last moments, Constantius bequeathed to his eldest son the care of the safety, as well as greatness, of the family; conjuring him to assume both the authority and the sentiments of a father, with regard to the children of Theodora. Their liberal education, advantageous marriages, the secure dignity of their lives, and the first honours of the state with which they were invested, attest the fraternal affection of Constantine; and as those Princes possessed a mild and grateful disposition, they submitted without reluctance to the superiority of his genius and fortune.†

Galerius had bitterly provoked the inhabitants of Rome by a somewhat novel and vexatious mode of taxation, which, added to the long absence of the Sovereigns from the imperial city, filled the empire with indignation and discontent, and ultimately induced a rival to his throne to be encouraged and supported. The name of this aspirant was Maxentius, the son of the late Emperor Herculeus, who had also married the daughter of Galerius. His birth and alliance appeared to offer him the fairest promise of succeeding to the empire; but his vices and incapacity procured him the same exclusion from the dignity of Cæsar, which Constantine had deserved by a dangerous superiority of merit. The policy of Galerius preferred such associates as would never disgrace the choice, nor dispute the commands, of their benefactor. An obscure stranger was therefore raised to the throne of Italy; and the son of the late Emperor of the West was left to enjoy the luxury of a private fortune in a villa a few miles distant from the capital. The gloomy passions of his soul, shame, vexation, and rage, were inflamed by envy on the news of Constantine's success; but the hopes of Maxentius revived with the public discontent, and he was easily persuaded to unite his personal injury and pretensions with the cause of the Roman people. Two Prætorian Tribunes, and a commissary of provisions, undertook the management of the conspiracy; and as every order of men was actuated by the same spirit, the immediate

* Gibbon, Decline and Fall, vol. ii., p. 191. 8vo. edit.

† Of the three sisters of Constantine, Constantia married the Emperor Licinius; Anastasia, the Cæsar Bassianus; and Eutropia, the Consul Nepotianus. The three brothers were, Dalmatius, Julius Constantius, and Annibalianus.

event was neither doubtful nor difficult. The Prefect of the city and a few Magistrates, who maintained their fidelity to Severus, were massacred by the guards; and Maxentius, invested with the imperial ornaments, was acknowledged by the applauding Senate and people, as the protector of the Roman freedom and dignity; but as soon as the standard of rebellion was erected at Rome, the old Emperor broke from the retirement where the authority of Diocletian had condemned him to pass a life of melancholy solitude, and concealed his returning ambition under the disguise of paternal tenderness.* At the request of his son and the Senate, he condescended to re-assume the purple.† His ancient dignity, his experience, and his fame in arms, added strength, as well as reputation, to the party of Maxentius.‡

Galerius now thought seriously of checking this formidable opponent, and the new Emperor Severus was ordered to march into Italy. He immediately hastened to Rome, in the full confidence that, by his unexpected celerity, he should easily suppress the tumult of an unwarlike populace commanded by a licentious and headstrong youth. In this, however, he was fatally mistaken. On his arrival before the gates of the city, he found them closed against him, the walls were filled with men and arms, an experienced General at the head of the rebels, and his own troops destitute of attachment or courage. A large body of Moors had deserted to the enemy, being allured by the promise of a larger donative. Anulinus, the Prætorian Prefect, declared himself in favour of Maxentius, and drew after him a considerable portion of the troops. The unfortunate Severus, destitute of counsel and of friends, fled to Ravenna, where for some time he might have been safe. Herculeus conducted the siege in person, and, soon finding that the position of the fugitive was almost impregnable, endeavoured by subtlety to overcome Severus. The emissaries of the father of Maxentius persuaded him, that a conspiracy was formed to betray the town, and prevailed upon him not to expose himself to the discretion of an irritated conqueror, but to accept the faith of an honourable capitulation. He was at first received with humanity, and treated with respect. Herculeus conducted the captive Emperor to Rome, and gave him the most solemn assurances that he had secured his life by the resignation of the purple. But Severus could obtain only an easy death, and an imperial funeral. When the sentence was signified to him, the manner of executing it was left to his own choice: he preferred the favourite mode of the ancients, that of opening his veins; and as soon as he expired, his body was carried to the sepulchre which had been constructed for the family of Gallienus.

* "Maxentius in the commencement pretended, by a species of accommodation and flattery towards the Romans, that he was of our faith. He therefore commanded his subjects to desist from persecuting the Christians, pretending to piety, with a view to appear much more mild and merciful than the former rulers. But he by no means proved to be in his actions such as he was expected." (Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. viii., cap. 14.) This kindness was only assumed to serve a purpose.

† At present, Constantine stood rather aloof from the affairs of Italy and the East; and till the resumption of the purple by Herculeus, his active mind was chiefly employed in the consolidation of his own power in Gaul, and the repulse of the German barbarians, who threatened the frontiers of the Rhine. (Milman.)

‡ Gibbon, Decline and Fall, vol. ii., p. 196, 8vo., Milman's Edit.

News was ere long brought to Rome that Galerius, in order to revenge the death of Severus, was drawing towards that city, at the head of a powerful army collected from Illyricum and the East. Though the characters of Constantine and Maxentius had but little affinity with each other, their situation and interests were somewhat identified: prudence therefore dictated that they should unite their forces against the common enemy. With this object in view, Herculeus visited Gaul, accompanied by his daughter Fausta, whom he gave in marriage to Constantine as the pledge of the new alliance. In the mean time Galerius had marched to Rome, impatient to punish the inhabitants as well as Maxentius. But his soldiers dealt with Galerius as they had with Severus. He found every place hostile, fortified, and inaccessible. He made the first advances towards a reconciliation, and despatched two of his most considerable officers to tempt the Roman Princes by the offer of a conference, and the declaration of his paternal regard for Maxentius, who might obtain much more by his liberality than he could hope from the doubtful chance of war. The offers of Galerius were rejected with firmness; his perfidious friendship refused with contempt; and it was not long before he discovered, that, unless he provided for his safety by a timely retreat, he had some reason to apprehend the fate of Severus. During his flight, Maxentius hung on his rear; but he very prudently declined a general engagement with those brave and desperate veterans. His father had undertaken a second journey into Gaul, with the hope of persuading Constantine, who had assembled an army on the frontier, to join the pursuit, and to complete the victory. The actions of Constantine were guided by reason, and not by resentment. He persisted in the wise resolution of maintaining a balance of power in the divided empire, and he no longer hated Galerius when that aspiring Prince had ceased to be an object of terror.*

On their return, Herculeus shared the government of Rome with his son. In this, however, they could not agree; and perceiving that Maxentius was the favourite with the army, he resolved to visit Galerius in Illyria. Diocletian was also there at the same time; and while there, Galerius made Licinius Emperor in the room of Severus. At this Maxentius was terribly enraged, and, without waiting for the consent of Galerius, took the same title to himself. About the same time another Emperor appeared in Africa. Maxentius wished to extend his authority in that country; but meeting with opposition at Carthage, and from Alexander, who commanded the Prætorian guards, he laid a plan for destroying him. Alexander, having discovered it, assumed the purple himself, and was able to retain his dignity for more than three years. One of his first acts was to persecute the Christians, and they continued more or less in a state of suffering during the whole of that time. We also learn from the events of this period, that the Egyptian church was not partaking of the peace which was enjoyed by the subjects of Constantine. Egypt was considered to belong to the eastern division of the empire, and was therefore subject to Maximinus. That monster appears to have been again in Palestine during

* Gibbon, Decline and Fall, vol. ii., p. 203, Milman's Edit., 8vo.

part of this year, (307,) and when he was absent, his orders were executed to the utmost of his wishes by Urbanus, and subsequently by Firmilianus, who was Governor of the province, and the work of torture was kept up during the whole period at Cæsarea.* The Martyrologies speak of a Governor of Egypt, named Mennas, who was a Christian; and Hermogenes, who was sent to supersede him, is said to have been also converted. Maximinus then went in person to Alexandria, and had both these persons tortured to death; but though there is reason to think that Maximinus was at Alexandria during this persecution, the story of the two Christian Governors is not to be received implicitly. There is, however, no doubt that it was this Emperor who ordered the persons that were sent to the mines to have their right eyes forced out, and their left feet dislocated.† These and similar mutilations became henceforth a favourite punishment; and, in addition to the pain and lasting inconvenience which they caused, they were intended also as a mark of disgrace; since persons who were thus disfigured were considered to be incapable of the rights of citizens. Another tradition, which is perhaps not authentic, concerns a Governor of the Thebaid, named Arianus,‡ who is said to have been a Christian, and to have suffered for his religion. The zeal which was displayed at this trying time by Antony the Monk, may be received with more certainty. The life of this extraordinary man has been written by Athanasius, who may be called his contemporary, though much younger in age; and though the account contains some marvellous anecdotes, which may excite our suspicions, the outline of his history must at least be true. Antony was one of those persons who were at this time living by themselves, or in small fraternities, in the deserts of Egypt; and when he saw the Christians going in crowds to Alexandria to be tortured, he followed them thither, that he might encourage and comfort them under their sufferings. He visited them constantly in the prisons or in the mines, and was not afraid of personally encountering the Magistrates. He seemed indeed to be courting martyrdom; but, though he continued a long time in Alexandria, his wish was not gratified, and he lived to return to his solitary life.§ Alban Butler

* Burton, Lect. on Eccles. Hist., lect. xxix.

† Compare Euseb., de Mart. Palest., cap. viii.; Lactant., De Mort. Persecut., cap. xxxvi. The effects of this cruelty were witnessed many years after. Paphnutius, an Egyptian Bishop, attended the Council of Nice, who had been maimed in this way. (Ruffinus, Eccles. Hist., lib. x., cap. iv., fol., 1479; Theodoret., Eccles. Hist., lib. i., cap. vii.) Paul, Bishop of Neocæsarea, was also at the Council of Nice. (Theodoret., Eccles. Hist., lib. i., cap. vii.) Maximus, Bishop of Jerusalem, is also mentioned. (Theodoret., Eccles. Hist., lib. ii., cap. 26.) Also Potamon, Bishop of Heraclea. (Epiphan., Hæres., lib. lxviii., 7.)

‡ Eorum etiam qui in Thebaide passi sunt, perillustres habentur Leonides, Ascla, aliique complures sub Ariano Præside, qui et ipse victus potenti Christi virtute, dans manus, et Christianus effectus, pro fide quoque nobile certamen subiit. Verum et in Philemone Coraule miro quodammodo Christi virtus effulsit. Nam Apollonius lector tormenta expavescens, ne fidem omnino negaret, quatuor Philemoni dedit aureos, ut se Apollonium mutato habitu fingeret, ac coram Præside una cum aliis immolaret: at mente divinitus illustratus, martyrumque accensus exemplo, qui alienam gerebat personam ut negaret, propriam repræsentans se vere in Christum credere constante voce professus, at tormentis exagitatus, iterum atque iterum id ipsum affirmans, insigni meruit corona martyrii decorari, cujus exemplo Apollonius roboratus, forti animo idem certamen obiit. Extant horum Acta fusius scripta. (Annales Ecclesiast. Baronii, cum Critice Pagii. A.D. 310, sect. 24, tom. iii., Lucæ, fol., 1738.)

§ Burton, Lect. on Eccles. Hist., lect. xxix.

abounds in the miraculous with regard to Antony; but his statements are thoroughly unworthy of notice.

Quirinus,* the Bishop of Siscia, underwent martyrdom at this time. Siscia was situated in upper Pannonia, a town now called Sisseg, in Croatia. This Prelate, having intelligence of the command of the Governor for his apprehension, left the town, in order to avoid the storm that was gathering: he was pursued and taken, and conveyed before Maximus the Governor, who asked him whither he was fleeing. The martyr answered, "I did not flee, but went away to obey the order of my Master. For it is written, 'When they persecute you in one city, flee to another.'" Maximus asked, "Who gave you that order?" Quirinus said, "Jesus Christ, who is the true God." "Know you not," said the Magistrate, "that the Emperors' orders would find you out anywhere? Nor can he whom you call the true God help or rescue you when you are fallen into their hands, as you now see to your cost." The martyr replied, "The God whom we adore is always with us wherever we are, and can always help us. He was with me when I was taken, and is now with me. It is He that strengthens me, and now answers you by my mouth." Maximus replied, "You talk much, and are guilty therefore of delay in executing the commands of the Sovereigns: read their edicts, and comply with their demands." The Bishop said, "I make no account of such injunctions: they are impious, contrary to the commandments of Almighty God, and would compel us who are his servants to offer sacrifice to imaginary gods. The God whom I serve is everywhere; He is in heaven, on earth, and in the sea. He is above all, and by Him all things subsist." Maximus said, "Old age has weakened your understanding, and you are deluded by idle tales. See! here is incense, offer it to the gods, or you will have many affronts to bear, and will suffer a cruel death." The Bishop replied, "That disgrace I account my glory; and death will procure for me eternal life. I respect only the altar of my God, on which I have often presented to Him a sacrifice of sweet odour." "I perceive," said Maximus, "that you are distracted, and that your madness will be the cause of your death. Sacrifice to the gods." "No," said Quirinus, "I do not sacrifice to devils." Maximus then ordered him to be beaten with clubs, and the sentence was executed with great cruelty. The Judge said to him, while under that torment, "Now confess the power of the gods whom the great Roman empire adores. Obey, and I will make you Priest of Jupiter." Quirinus replied, "I am now performing the true functions of a Priest, in offering myself a sacrifice to the living God. I feel not the blows which my body has received: they give me no torment. I am ready to suffer much greater tortures, that they who have been committed to my charge may be encouraged to follow me to eternal life." Having by this speech convinced the Judge that he was proof against all his attempts, he was ordered to prison, in the hope that the weight of his chain, and the other hardships of a jail, would accomplish the anti-

* Jerome makes honourable mention of Quirinus in his Chronicle. Prudentius calls him an eminent martyr; and Fortunatus ranks him among the most illustrious confessors of the church. See his Acts as recorded in Surius, Ruinart, and Prudentius.

cipated change. The Magistrate of the place not having authority to put the martyr to death, after three days' imprisonment, he sent him to Amantius, Governor of the province called the First Pannonia. Prudentius terms him Galerius, Governor of Illyricum, under which Pannonia was comprised. The Bishop was carried in chains through all the towns that lie on the Danube, till, being brought before Amantius, then on his return from Scarabantia, the Governor ordered him to be conducted to Sabaria, whither he himself was going. On his arrival the Governor ordered him to be brought before him in the public theatre; and, having read the record of what had passed between him and Maximus, asked the martyr if he acknowledged the truth of its contents, and whether he persisted in his recognition of the Christian faith. Quirinus answered, "I have confessed the true God at Siscia: I have never adored any other. Him I carry in my heart, and no man on earth shall ever be able to separate me from him." Amantius endeavoured to overcome his resolution by large promises, and by the consideration of his old age; but finding him inflexible, he sentenced him to be thrown into the river with a millstone suspended to his neck; and his order was obeyed. But, to the great astonishment of the spectators, (who were assembled in crowds on the banks of the river to witness the execution,) the Bishop, instead of sinking, continued a long time on the surface of the water, exhorting the Christians to continue steadfast in the faith, and to dread neither torture nor death itself. But, perceiving that he did not sink, he feared that he might lose the martyr's crown, and therefore addressed the Saviour in the following or similar words:—"It is not wonderful for thee, O Almighty Jesus, to stop the course of rivers, as thou didst that of Jordan, nor to make men walk upon the water, as Peter did upon the sea by thy divine power. These people have had a sufficient proof in me of the effect of thy power. Grant me what now remains, and is to be preferred to all things, the happiness of dying for thee, Jesus Christ my God." * His petition was granted, and he expired.

The persecution still prevailed in Palestine. Five Christians of Egypt were arrested at Cæsarea; and being asked the usual questions, and having confessed themselves to be the followers of Christ, they acknowledged that they had been to Cilicia to visit their brethren, who were condemned to work in the mines for their religion, and that they were come to Cæsarea to pay the like duty to their afflicted brethren, who were in prison there for the same cause, after which they intended to return home. This declaration was of itself sufficient to convict them: they were put in irons as criminals caught in the fact, and carried before Firmilianus, the Governor of the place, to whom they repeated their confession, and were ordered to prison. The following day they

* The Acts of this martyr say, "That he with difficulty obtained by his prayers to be drowned." His body was found a little below the place, and laid in a chapel built on the bank. Soon after a great church was erected near the gate of Sabaria, leading to Scarabantia, in which his remains were laid. When, by the inroads of barbarians, the Pannonians were afterwards driven out of their country, the relics of this martyr were carried to Rome, and deposited in the catacombs of St. Sebastian; but removed in 1140 into the church of St. Mary, beyond the Tiber. Molanus shows that they are now kept in a monastery of Bavaria. The river in which Quirinus was drowned was called Sabarius, now Guntz. (Alban Butler, June 4th.)

were brought before the Governor, with Pamphilus, of whom we have already given the history; with other Christians. Firmilianus commenced with the five Egyptians, whose courage he assailed by a variety of torments; but finding them invincible, he proceeded to the usual interrogatories, as to whose religion and to what country they belonged. One of them replied for the whole company, and said, that their names were Elias, Jeremiah, Samuel, and David, and that Jerusalem was their country, evidently meaning the heavenly city, the true country of the faithful. Firmilian was surprised at the mention of Jerusalem, knowing that city to have been totally destroyed by Vespasian, and his son Titus; and the city which Hadrian had erected on its ruins, was called Ælia Capitolina. He asked where that city was to be found; and even went so far as to apply additional torture, to compel a further confession. Elias assured the Magistrate that he had told him the whole truth, and that it was inhabited only by the true servants of God. He maintained an undisturbed calmness amidst the most violent torments; and, transported with the views of the heavenly Jerusalem, he even pursued his allegory, and gave a glowing account of the riches and strength of that city, until the Governor was actually alarmed, and imagined that the Christians were concocting designs against the enemy, and fortifying themselves in Jerusalem. Perplexed with this thought, and finding that nothing more was to be elicited, he condemned him to lose his head. His countrymen underwent the same trials, and submitted to the same punishment.

In Gaul and Britain, where Constantine was personally present, tranquillity prevailed;* but in Egypt and Palestine the Christians groaned under the tyranny of Maximinus; and although Maxentius had usurped the imperial authority in Italy, he did not for some time molest the Christians. The see of Rome, which had for a season continued vacant, was filled up in 308 by the election of Marcellus. Such, at least, is the most probable calculation,† though others suppose Marcellus to have succeeded Marcellinus in the same year. If we may receive the epitaph as genuine, which is said to have been written upon Marcellus ‡ by Damasus, one of his successors, he was

* Lactant., Institut. Divin., lib. i., cap. 1; De Religione et Sapientiâ. De Morte Persecut., cap. xxiv.

† Baronii Annales Eccles., cum Critice Pagi, anno 306, sect. 25, tom. iii., Lucæ, 1738, fol.

‡ Upon the death of Marcellinus, the see remained vacant somewhat about three years and a half, when Marcellus was chosen in his room. Thus says the Pontifical of Bucherius, "where instead of seven years, which is a mistake of the transcribers, as is manifest from the Consulships marked there, we must read three. The similitude of the two names has misled some writers to confound Marcellinus with Marcellus; for Eusebius, as well as Jerome, only mention the former; and Theodoret, omitting both Marcellus and Eusebius, who succeeded him, names Melchiades as the immediate successor of Marcellinus; which has made Dr. Pearson doubt whether Marcellus was ever Bishop of Rome. But Marcellinus and Marcellus are evidently distinguished in the Pontifical of Bucherius, by the different times in which they governed, and the different Consuls under whom their government began and ended. They are, besides, distinguished both by Optatus Milevitanus and Augustine, who speak of Marcellus, not only as a Presbyter of the Church of Rome, but as Bishop of that see. To these testimonies I may add the epitaph of Marcellus by Damasus, supposing him to have been Bishop

particularly strict in requiring the lapsed to submit to a course of penitence. His measures are said to have given rise, not only to discontent and complaint, but even to tumults and bloodshed, which might confirm the notion of the Christians being at this time unmolested by their enemies; and thus, unhappily, they were able to give vent to their feelings of hostility towards each other. So true it is that seasons of peace, however short, have often been a cause of misery and scandal to the church. Maxentius was in possession of Rome, but so entirely engaged with his rival Emperors, that he had not time to pursue his own corrupt and barbarous inclinations, and conducted himself so tyrannically to all his subjects, that the Heathen were occupied in looking to themselves, without seeking to persecute the Christians.* The persecution was carried on as hotly as ever in Egypt. One hundred and thirty Christians had their eyes and feet treated as was usual at this period, and were afterwards sent to work in the mines. It seems to have required all the activity of Maximinus, and his insatiable love of cruelty, to have his orders executed by the provincial Magistrates. In spite of all his vigilance, the humanity of these men sometimes prevailed over their fear of offending the tyrant, and the Christians felt their chains becoming lighter upon them. Marcellus thought this a fitting opportunity to restore that discipline in the church, which the confusion of the times had disturbed. He failed, however, in his plans: the debates in the church ran high, and even raised disturbances in the city. Maxentius, who was a great enemy of the Christians, laid the blame of its worst consequences upon Marcellus, whom he first condemned to keep beasts in a stable, and then banished him as an incendiary, and a disturber of the public peace, when the hardships he suffered in his exile soon put an end to his life, and procured him the title of a martyr.

The cruelty of Maximinus was notorious. The Christians who were condemned to work in the mines of Palestine, had begun to enjoy more liberty, and the houses in which some of them lived were employed as churches. The Governor of the province, having observed the alteration in their condition, wrote to Maximinus concerning it; and an order was accordingly sent to the overseer of the mines, that these indulgences should cease. The plan adopted for annoying the Christians was, to disperse them in different places. Some were sent to Cyprus, some to Mount Libanus, others to various parts of Palestine, where they were all confined to hard labour. This, however, was not sufficient severity. Four victims were selected, who were, perhaps, of the most note among the number, and sent to the military commander of the district. Two of them, Peleus and Nilus, were Egyptian Bishops; the other two were Presbyters; and when they refused to abjure the faith, they were ordered to be burnt. There were others, who from their age or bodily infirmities had been unable to work in the mines, and had been allowed to live in a place

of Rome. Damasus flourished about the year 366. Many things are said of Marcellus; but they are all founded either on his Acts, or the modern Pontificals, and, consequently, have little or no authority." (Bower, Hist. of the Popes, vol. i., p. 85.)

* Burton, Lect. on Eccles. Hist., lect. xxix.

by themselves; one of whom was Silvanus, the venerable Bishop of Gaza, who had been sent to the mines three years before, having first had his foot dislocated. Another, named John, had come with the prisoners from Egypt; and though he was already blind, the same cruelty had been inflicted upon his eyes as upon the rest. His blindness did not hinder him from knowing the Scriptures by heart. The whole number of these persons was thirty-nine; and since they could not bear the removal, and they were of no use as labourers, Maximinus commanded them all to be beheaded in one day.*

The words of our Saviour, in his incomparable sermon on the Mount, never received a more just illustration than in the person of Herculeus, who all along had been one of the most sanguinary and inveterate persecutors of the Christian name of which the church had to complain. "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." When Herculeus had reluctantly abdicated the empire, the venal orators of the times applauded his philosophic moderation. When his ambition excited, or at least encouraged, a civil war, they returned thanks to his generous patriotism, and gently censured that love of ease and retirement which had withdrawn him from the public service. But it was impossible that minds like those of Herculeus and his son could long possess in harmony an undivided power. Maxentius considered himself as the legal Sovereign of Italy, elected by the Roman Senate and people; nor would he endure the control of his father, who arrogantly declared, that by his name and abilities the rash youth had been established on the throne. The cause was solemnly pleaded before the Prætorian guards; and those troops, who dreaded the severity of the old Emperor, espoused the party of Maxentius. The life and freedom of Herculeus were, however, respected, and he retired from Italy into Illyricum, affecting to lament his past conduct, and secretly contriving new mischiefs. But Galerius, who was well acquainted with his character, soon obliged him to leave his dominions; and the last refuge of the disappointed Herculeus was the court of his son-in-law Constantine. He was received with respect and filial tenderness by Fausta. That he might remove every suspicion, he resigned the imperial purple a second time, professing himself at length convinced of the vanity of greatness and ambition.† Had he persevered in this resolution, he might have ended his life with less dignity, indeed, than in his first retirement; yet, however, with comfort and reputation. But the near prospect of a throne brought back to his remembrance the state whence he was fallen; and he resolved, by a desperate effort, either to reign or to perish. An incursion of the Franks had summoned Constantine, with a part of his army, to the banks of the Rhine; the remainder of the troops were stationed in the southern provinces of Gaul, which lay exposed to the enterprises of the Italian Emperor; and a consider-

* Burton, Lect. on Eccles. Hist., lect. xxix.

† Lactant., De Morte Persecut., cap. xxix. After the resignation of the purple, Constantine still continued to Herculeus the pomp and honours of the imperial dignity; and on all public occasions, gave the right-hand place to his father-in-law. (Eumenius, Panegyr., lib. vii., cap. 15; Delphin. Clas. cum Var. Not., No. 122.)

able treasure was deposited in the city of Arles. Herculeus either craftily invented, or hastily credited, a vain report of the death of Constantine. Without hesitation he ascended the throne, seized the treasure, and, scattering it with his accustomed profusion among the soldiers, endeavoured to awaken in their minds the memory of his ancient dignity and exploits. Before he could establish his authority, or finish the negotiation which he appears to have entered into with his son Maxentius, the celerity of Constantine defeated all his hopes. On the first news of his perfidy and ingratitude, that Prince returned by rapid marches from the Rhone to the Saone, embarked on the last-mentioned river at Chalons; and, at Lyons trusting himself to the rapidity of the Rhine, arrived at the gates of Arles with a military force, which it was impossible for Herculeus to resist, and which scarcely permitted him to take refuge in the neighbouring city of Marseilles. The narrow neck of land which joined that place to the Continent was fortified against the besiegers; whilst the sea was open, either for the escape of Herculeus, or for the succours of Maxentius, if the latter should choose to disguise his invasion of Gaul under the honourable pretence of defending a distressed or, as he might allege, an injured father. Apprehensive of the fatal consequences of delay, Constantine gave orders for an immediate assault; but the scaling-ladders were found too short for the height of the walls, and Marseilles might have sustained as long a siege as it formerly did against the arms of Cæsar, if the garrison, conscious either of their fault or of their danger, had not purchased their pardon by delivering up the city and the person of Herculeus. A secret, but irrevocable, sentence of death was pronounced against the usurper: he obtained only the same favour which he had rendered to Severus; and it was published to the world, that, oppressed by the remorse of his repeated crimes, he strangled himself with his own hands.*

Maximinus continued to vex the church; and the martyrdoms which took place in the early part of the year 310 were chiefly at Tyre, many of which were witnessed by Eusebius. He was not unlikely to leave Cæsarea when his friend Pamphilus suffered; and since he was then engaged in finishing his defence of Origen, he might be able to complete the work at Tyre, where the last years of the life of that celebrated man were passed, and where Methodius, the earliest and most formidable assailant of Origen's character, had lately held the episcopal see. While Eusebius was at Tyre, he saw several Christians exposed to wild beasts in the amphitheatre; and he could hardly be mistaken, when he states expressly, that he saw these animals refuse to touch them, though every expedient was used to excite their fury.† Tyrannion, Bishop of Tyre, and Zenobius, a Presbyter of Sidon, who was also a Physician, were martyred in the course of this persecution; but they were taken from their own cities, and suffered at Antioch;‡ and at the time of Eusebius visiting the city, Paulinus was Bishop of Tyre, with whom he formed an intimacy, and dedicated to him his

* Gibbon, Decline and Fall, vol. ii., p. 206, edit. Milman, 8vo.
† Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. viii., cap. 7.
‡ Ibid., cap. 13.

work on Ecclesiastical History. Eusebius also appears to have been in Egypt, where he witnessed some of the sufferings which he has described;* and it is most probable, that this journey was undertaken after the death of Pamphilus. Another author who wrote in defence of Christianity at this time, was Arnobius, a native of Sicca in Africa, and a teacher of rhetoric. Having been bred in Heathenism, he had been in the habit of decrying Christianity; and when he was afterwards convinced of its truth, he found a difficulty in being admitted to baptism. He accordingly wrote a work in seven books against the Heathen, which is still extant, and is a masterly exposure of the follies of Paganism. If the date of this work be rightly fixed to the year 310, the author, when he speaks of the persecution, may, perhaps, have alluded to what was done by the usurper Alexander, as well as to the earlier decrees of Diocletian and Herculeus; but since Lactantius was a pupil of Arnobius, and was himself a teacher of rhetoric at Nicomedia, at the commencement of the persecution, Arnobius was probably advanced in years at the time of his conversion. †

The state of the church assumed at this period a more tranquil aspect. In the commencement of 310, Marcellus, Bishop of Rome, who had been driven from the see by Maxentius, was succeeded by Eusebius,‡ who held the office only for a few months; and was also followed by Melchiades. Dr. Burton says, that it seems probable that the Roman Christians were exposed to particular sufferings at this period. Maxentius could have felt no partiality towards them, except from political motives; but he had promised them a freedom from vexation at the beginning of his usurpation; and he does not appear to have behaved more tyrannically towards them, than he did to all his subjects. If Marcellus were banished from Rome by his orders, it is not proved that this act formed a part of any general persecution. An apostate from Christianity is said to have excited the displeasure of the tyrant against the Bishop; and he may, perhaps, have invented some accusation which was not connected with questions against religion. Maxentius had also promised to give back to the Christians their places of worship, which had been taken from them; but though he had written a letter to this effect, and his commander of the Prætorian guards had done the same, the business was not more advanced when Melchiades was elected, than it had been four years before. This Bishop sent these letters by some of his Deacons to the Prefect of the city, and claimed a fulfilment of the promise; but we are not informed whether his application succeeded. Melchiades was accused afterwards of having sent this message by a Deacon who had delivered up

* Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. viii., cap. 9.

† Burton, Lect. on Eccles. Hist., lect. xxix.

‡ Marcellus was succeeded by Eusebius, who governed seven months, according to the historian; but only four months and sixteen days, according to the Pontifical of Bucherius. From an ancient epitaph on this Pope, we learn that he opposed with great vigour and zeal one Heraclius, pretending that those who had fallen during the persecution ought to be re-admitted to the communion of the church, without giving such satisfaction as was then required; and that hereupon great divisions occurred among the people. (Bower, Hist. of the Popes, vol. i, p. 86, 4to.)

some property of the church during the late persecution; but he denied the charge. Maxentius caused some relief to the Christians in another quarter, in 311, by sending an officer into Africa, who defeated and slew Alexander. The persecution had been revived in that country since 307; and though it perhaps did not extend far, the immediate presence of the usurper was likely to be a source of danger to the Christians. There is evidence that Mensurius, Bishop of Carthage, was exposed to considerable suffering. A Deacon named Felix had written a letter against the usurper, and, being afraid of the consequences, had taken refuge with Mensurius. The Bishop, having refused to give him up, was examined before a Magistrate, who acquitted him, and allowed him to return to Carthage; but he died before he reached the city, and Cæcilianus was elected in his room. There was a party in the church of Carthage which had opposed Mensurius, and charged him with belonging to the *traditores;* but it appeared afterwards to be a calumny; and at the time of his examination, he had a list of several valuable articles belonging to his church, which he left to be given to his successor. The persecution in that country did not, in fact, entirely cease till the end of the following year, when Maxentius sent an order into Africa that the Christians should not be molested. There were, however, much more effectual steps taken to relieve the Christians in the eastern part of the empire. They had now had little or no intermission of their sufferings for eight years, since the issuing of the first edict by Diocletian and Galerius in 303.*

The most signal and unexpected triumph of Christianity was over the author of the persecution. While victory and success appeared to follow that party in the state, which, if they had not as yet openly espoused the cause of Christianity, had unquestionably its most ardent prayers in their favour; the enemies of the Christians were smitten with the direst calamities, and the Almighty appeared visibly to exact the most awful vengeance for their sufferings. Galerius himself was compelled, as it were, to implore mercy; not indeed in the attitude of penitence, but of profound humiliation at the foot of the Christian altar. In the eighteenth year of his reign, the persecutor lay expiring of a most loathsome malady. A deep and fetid ulcer preyed on the lower regions of his body, and ate them away into a mass of living corruption. "It is certainly singular," observes Mr. Milman, "that the disease, termed in Scripture 'eaten of worms,' should have been the destiny of Herod, of Galerius, and of Philip II. of Spain.† Physicians were sought from all quarters; every oracle was consulted in vain; that of Apollo suggested a cure which aggravated the virulence of the disease. Not merely the chamber, the whole palace of Galerius is described as infected by the insupportable stench which issued from his wound; while the agonies which he suffered might have satiated

* Barton, Lect. on Eccles. Hist., lect. xxx.

† "A complication of disorders brought him into a state from which it was manifest he could not recover; and being sensible that his end was approaching, he caused himself to be conveyed to Madrid to his own palace of the Escurial, where, in the midst of great suffering, he expired, September 13th, 1598." (Rose, Biog. Dict.)

the worst vengeance of his most unchristian enemy."* At length, being reminded that the disease was sent by God, he began to reflect upon the injury that he had done to the saints of the Most High; and from his dying bed he issued an edict, which—while it condescended to apologize for the past severities against the Christians, under the special plea of regard for the public welfare and the unity of the state, and while it expressed compassion for his deluded subjects, whom the Government was unwilling to leave in the forlorn condition of being absolutely without a religion—admitted to the fullest extent the total failure of the severe measures for the suppression of Christianity. It permitted the free and public exercise of the Christian religion. The concluding sentences of this edict were still more remarkable: they contained an earnest request to the Christians to intercede for the suffering Emperor in their supplications to their God. Whether this edict was dictated by wisdom, by remorse, or by superstitious terror; whether it was the act of a statesman, convinced by experience of the impolicy, or even the injustice, of his sanguinary acts; whether, in the agonies of his excruciating disease, his conscience was harassed by the thought of his tortured victims; or, having vainly solicited the assistance of his own deities, he would desperately endeavour to propitiate the favour, or at least allay the wrath, of the Christians' God; the whole Roman world was witness of the public and humiliating acknowledgment of defeat extorted from the dying Emperor. On the 13th of April this edict† was issued at Nicomedia in the name of himself, Constantine, and Licinius. Copies of the decree, and directions in accordance with it, were immediately sent to the different governments of Asia Minor, and Galerius expired shortly after its promulgation.

This edict accorded with the sentiments of Licinius and Constantine. Maximinus, the Cæsar of the East, whose peculiar jurisdiction

* Milman, History of Christianity, vol. ii., p. 286.

† A translation of this celebrated decree we subjoin:—"Among the other plans which we had conceived for the public profit and convenience, it was early our wish to reform all things according to the ancient laws and the national principles of the Romans; especially to devise means whereby the Christians, who have relinquished the opinions and usages of their parents, might be brought back to a right mind. For such a degree of arrogance and folly has (by some fancy) possessed them, that they will not follow the sanctions of their ancestors, which it is likely they also had before received from their parents; but they make laws for themselves, and observe them, just according to their own individual fancy and arbitrement, assembling large multitudes of people in divers places. Therefore, when we had published such an edict as should oblige them to return to the rites and ordinances of their ancestors, many of them were exposed to imminent dangers; and many, having been actually troubled, finally underwent death in various forms. But when many persisted in this madness, and we perceived they did neither exhibit a due worship to the celestial gods, nor yet to the God of the Christians; having respect to our humanity, and that continued usage by which we have been accustomed to exercise pardon towards all sorts of men, we have thought good most readily to extend our indulgence in this matter also; so that the Christians should again be tolerated, and that they should have licence to rebuild the houses wherein they used to assemble themselves, and that they may not in future be forced to do anything contrary to their principles. In another rescript we will signify to our Judges what it shall behove them to observe. Wherefore, in gratitude for this our indulgence, they ought to supplicate their God both for our welfare and that of the commonwealth, as well as their own; that so both public affairs may everywhere be kept in a wholesome state, and they themselves may live securely in their own dwellings." (Foxe, Acts and Monuments, vol. i., p. 239, 8vo., Seeley's edit.)

extended over Syria and Egypt, rendered but an imperfect and reluctant obedience to the decree of toleration. His jealousy was, no doubt, excited by the omission of his name in the preamble to the edict; and he seized this excuse to discountenance its promulgation in his provinces: nevertheless, for a time, he suppressed his profound and indomitable hostility to the Christian name. He permitted unwritten orders to go forth to the municipal Governors of the towns and to the Magistrates of the villages, to put an end to all violent proceedings. The zeal of Sabinus, the Prætorian Prefect of the East, supposing the milder sentiments of Galerius to be shared by Maximinus, seems to have outrun the intentions of the Cæsar.* A circular rescript appeared in his name, echoing the tone, though it did not go quite to the length, of the imperial edict. It proclaimed, "that it had been the anxious wish of the divinity of the most mighty Emperors to reduce the whole empire to pay an harmonious and united worship to the immortal gods. But their clemency had at length taken compassion on the obverse perversity of the Christians, and determined on desisting from their ineffectual attempts to force them to abandon their hereditary faith." The Magistrates were instructed to communicate the contents of this letter to each other. The Governors of the provinces, supposing at once that the letter of the Prefect contained the real sentiments of the Emperor, with merciful haste despatched orders to all persons in subordinate civil or military command; the Magistrates both of the towns and the villages acted also upon them with unhesitating obedience; and the Christians were released from the prisons and the mines. In a moment all was joy, wonder, and thanksgiving, where before there had been suffering and sorrow. Places of worship were immediately opened in the towns, and attended by crowds. The roads were filled with persons returning to their homes; and even the Heathen were led to think that God alone could have worked so sudden and so great a change. How transitory and fleeting this prospect was, will, ere long, be proved in the sequel.†

* Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. ix., cap. 1; and Milman's History of Christianity, vol. ii., p. 287.

† Eusebius gives a very graphic account of the state of the church at this period:— "When these things had been executed, all on a sudden, like a flash of light blazing from dense darkness, in every city one could see congregations collected, assemblies thronged, and the accustomed meetings held in the same places. Every one of the Heathen was not a little astonished at these appearances; both amazed at the singular state of affairs, and exclaiming that the God of the Christians was the only great and true God. Those of our brethren who had faithfully and manfully passed through the conflict of persecution also obtained great privileges with all. And those who had deserted their faith, and had been shaken in their souls by the tempest, eagerly hastened to their remedy, supplicating and entreating the strong to give them the right hand of safety, and imploring God to be merciful unto them. Then, also, these noble wrestlers of religion, liberated from the hardships of labouring in the mines, were dismissed, and allowed to return to their own country. Joyous and cheerful they proceeded through every city, filled with an inexpressible pleasure and a confidence which language is inadequate to explain. Numerous bodies thus pursued their journey through the public highways and markets, celebrating the praises of God in songs and psalms. And they who had a little before been driven in bonds under a most merciless punishment from their respective countries, you could now see regaining their homes and fire-hearths with bright and exhilarated countenances; so that even they who had before exclaimed against us, seeing the wonder beyond all expectation, congratulated us on these events."

The jealousy of Maximinus because of Licinius having his name affixed to the edict of Galerius overpowered all other feelings, and he hastened into Bithynia to secure to himself the countries which had been governed by Galerius. Licinius was also at the head of an army, and there was every prospect of a civil war. They watched each other on either side of the Bosphorus with ill-dissembled hostility; but the two Emperors finally came to terms without a battle. Maximinus retained Asia Minor and Bithynia, while Illyria and Thrace were allotted to Licinius. It is also highly probable that, during the temporary tranquillity of the church, Peter, the Bishop of Alexandria, quitted his place of concealment, where he had for several years been hidden, and returned to his see. He lost no time in inquiring into the conduct of Meletius; and a synod of Bishops was convened to try him for his irregular proceedings, as well as for the heavier charge of having sacrificed in the late persecution.* A sentence of deposition was passed against Meletius; but so far from complying with it, or taking any steps to justify himself, he carried to still greater length his schismatical principles, and treated the Prelate of Alexandria with personal insolence. From this time the Meletian schism was regularly organized, and Peter would have the mortification to find his authority rejected by some of his Clergy. Arius at present did not join the seceders. He ceased to give his support to Meletius; and the character of Peter appears in a favourable light, when we find that he not only forgave Arius, but ordained him Deacon.† The reconciliation, however, did not last long. The Bishop found himself obliged to issue a sentence of excommunication against all the Meletians, and he took the decided measure of not recognising their baptisms. "We are scarcely competent," says Dr. Burton, "to determine whether he were justified in the latter step; but it was likely to revive ancient dissensions, and among other persons who expressed their dissatisfaction, Arius again distinguished himself. Peter felt that he had gone far enough in attempting to conciliate; and Arius, who had so lately been admitted to officiate in the church, was now excluded from its communion. He continued in this state for some time; but the persecution, as we shall see, shortly revived; and the Bishop, if he had acted hastily, was called to answer for his conduct at a higher tribunal."‡

The slippery character of Maximinus the tyrant scarcely suffered the peaceful state of the church to continue unviolated six months;

(Eccles. Hist., lib. ix., cap. i.) The cessation of the persecution showed at once its extent. The prison-doors were thrown open; the mines rendered up their condemned labourers; everywhere long trains of Christians were seen hastening to the ruins of their churches, and visiting the places sanctified by their former devotion. The public roads, the streets, and market-places of the towns were crowded with long processions, singing psalms of thanksgiving for their deliverance. Those who had maintained their faith under these severe trials passed triumphant in conscious, even if lowly, pride, amid the flattering congratulations of their brethren; those who had failed in the hour of affliction hastened to reunite themselves with their God, and to obtain readmission into the flourishing and reunited fold. (Milman.)

* Socrates, Eccles. Hist., lib. i., cap. 6.

† Sozomen, Hist. Eccles., lib. i., cap. 15.

‡ Burton, Lect. on Eccles. Hist., lect. xxx.

for whatever seemed to lead to its destruction, that did he sedulously foster and encourage. He deprived the Christians of all liberty to assemble in church-yards on any pretext whatsoever. He then sent certain miscreants to the Antiocheans, to solicit their suffrages against the faithful, especially by provoking him, as an act of favour shown to them, that he would not suffer any Christian to inhabit that country. Among these emissaries was one Theotecnus,* an enchanter by profession, and a most deadly enemy of the Christians. Foxe says, "He first made the way whereby the Christians were put out of credit with and accused to the Emperor; to which base end he also erected a certain idol of Jupiter to be worshipped by the enchanters and conjurers, and mingled the same worship with ceremonies full of deceivable witchcraft. Lastly, he caused the same idol to give this sound out of his mouth, that is, 'Jupiter commandeth the Christians to be banished out of the city, and suburbs of the same, as enemies unto him.' And the same sentence did the rest of the Governors of the provinces publish against them; and thus at length did the persecution begin to be kindled. Maximinus also appointed Priests in every city to offer sacrifice unto idols, and High Priests over these; and inveigled all those that were in high offices under him, that they should do all in their power against the Christians, and that they should with new-devised stratagems against them (as that would please him) put as many to death as by any means they might."† Another plan was to circulate calumnies concerning them. The old stories were revived of their religious meetings being full of indecency. One named Præfectus Castrorum,‡ whom the Romans call "Dux," residing at Damascus in Phœnicia, allured certain loose and abandoned women from the market-place, and their haunts of iniquity, and then, by threats of torture, compelled them to say in writing, that they were formerly Christians, and that they were acquainted with those wicked and licentious acts which the Christians were accustomed to practise amongst themselves at their assemblies on the Lord's day; and also any other tale which they might invent. The Præfectus Castrorum then made known to the Emperor their testimonies, as though they were veritable and correct, who forthwith commanded the same to be published throughout every city. Furthermore, they were accustomed to suspend, in some conspicuous and public place, the edicts of the Emperor against the members of the Christian church, graven on tables of brass. A deep and deliberate scheme was laid for the advancement of one party in the popular favour, and for the depression of the other. Measures were systematically taken to enfeeble the influence of Christianity, not by the authority of Government, but by poisoning the public mind, and infusing into it a settled

* Foxe, Acts and Monuments, vol. i., p. 241. Seeley's edition.

† Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. ix., cap. iii., iv. Foxe, Acts and Monuments, vol. i., p. 241.

‡ *Στρατοπεδαρχης*, Eusebius, "the Lieutenant." The chief Magistrate in the Emperor's provinces exercised both the civil and military functions, (see Adams, Rom. Antiq.,) and bore military titles. The Magistrates of Alexandria answered to our Sheriffs. It is evident, however, that the chief Magistrate of the province, or "Lieutenant," is here meant.

and conscientious animosity. A work was forged, called, "The Acts of Pilate," which gave a false and disgraceful account of the life of Jesus; and pains were taken that children at school should learn their lessons from such books as this.* New regulations were made concerning the heathen Priests; and not only were they established in every city and town, but each province had its own High Priest, who was taken from the persons of highest rank, was ordered to appear dressed in white, and was attended in public by a guard of soldiers.† The imitation of the Christians was evident in all this; and the Priests were not only ordered to perform sacrifices daily, but they were to prevent the Christians from building churches, and to compel them to attend the sacrifices. Maximinus wished to have it believed that he was only complying with the petitions of his subjects in again repressing Christianity. This was done not only by the people of Antioch, but of Nicomedia and Tyre, together with several other places; and not only were their petitions granted, but their letters, and the Emperor's answers to them, were engraved on brass, and exhibited in a conspicuous part of the city.‡ Maximinus had begun his former practice of burning out an eye, cutting off a hand, or maiming them in some other way; and he would evidently have gone greater lengths, if he had not been frightened by letters written to him by Constantine, and by hearing that a sister of that Emperor

* "Having forged certain Acts of Pilate, respecting our Saviour, full of every kind of blasphemy against Christ, these, with the consent of the Emperor, they sent through the whole of the empire subject to him, commanding at the same time by ordinances in every town and city, and the adjacent districts, to publish these to all persons, and to give them to the Schoolmasters to hand to their pupils, to study and commit to memory, as exercises for declamation." (Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. ix., cap. 5.) The original "Acts of Pilate" were a relation alleged to have been sent by Pilate to the Emperor Tiberius, concerning Jesus Christ, his death, resurrection, ascension, and the crimes of which he was convicted before him. It was a custom among the Romans that the Proconsuls and Governors of provinces should draw up acts or memoirs of what happened in the course of their government, and send them to the Emperor and Senate. The Acts of Pilate were sent by him to Tiberius, who reported them to the Senate; but they were rejected, it is said, by them, because not immediately addressed to that assembly. (Tertull. Apol., cap. 5, 20, 21.) The genuine Acts, if they ever existed, are now lost, and those that remain are manifestly spurious. (See Fabric., Cod. Apoc. Test., p. 298, Ap. 972.) Pearson, Mosheim, and Lardner are inclined to think that considerable credit is due to the account given by Justin Martyr and Tertullian of these Acts. Dupin and some others consider the whole matter very doubtful. Lardner discusses the subject with his usual impartiality. (Lardner, Works, 4to., vol. iii., pp. 599—606.)

† Euseb., Hist. Eccles., lib. viii., cap. 14; lib. ix., cap. 4. Lactant., De Mort. Persecut., cap. xxxvi.

‡ Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. ix., cap. 2, 7, 9. "A regular system of government, also, was instituted for the heathen priesthood, closely copied from that of the Christian republic. The sedulous care of the followers of Jesus in instilling into the minds of the young the knowledge and the love of the Gospel, was imitated under the direction of the advisers of Maximinus, in diligently impressing upon the youthful mind all that might prejudice it against Christianity. A work entitled, 'The Acts of Pilate,' the forgery of some enemy of our faith, and full of impious blasphemy against Christ, was circulated through the East; and schoolmasters were commanded to use it as one of their class-books. Rescripts also were engraved on tables of brass," (Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. ix., cap. 7,) "and placed in every city, by which Priests and Magistrates were empowered to inflict the most cruel and ignominious punishments on the refractory Christians. These rescripts continued in force throughout the dominions of Maximinus till after his defeat by Licinius, when, under the influence of rage and despair, he directed his fury against his former advisers, and issued an edict of toleration in favour of the Christians." (Euseb., Hist. Eccles., lib. ix., cap. 10.)

was about to be married to Licinius.* This made him act more secretly. He again opened a communication with Maxentius, that Constantine might find employment nearer home; and though he did not put Christians openly to death, he frequently caused them to be drowned. He also took care that all the meat which was served at his table should have passed through the hands of the Priest, so that whoever tasted it would be considered as party to a sacrifice; and he had thus the gratification of annoying the Christians who were likely to be invited to his table.† The faithful now found themselves exposed to great peril: the dogs of war against Christianity were let slip by the brutal and hypocritical Maximinus, and the church once more was clothed in sackcloth. The sufferings of the Christians in other parts of the empire were extremely great: Eusebius says, "that they felt them more severely than those of the nine preceding years."‡ It is highly probable that Hierocles§ was still the Governor of Egypt, who had shown, from the first, such determined opposition to the Christians. The Governor of the Thebaid at this time was Calcianus, who was another favourite of the tyrant, and whose hands were imbrued in the blood of several martyrs.‖ Many other Egyptian Bishops suffered.

The Emperor, in his public rescript, in answer to the address from the city of Tyre, had, as it were, placed the issue of this contest on an appeal to heaven. The gods of Paganism were asserted to be the benefactors of the human race: through their influence the soil had yielded its annual increase; the genial air had not been parched by fatal droughts; the sea had neither been agitated with tempests, nor swept by hurricanes; the earth, instead of being rocked by volcanic convulsions, had been the peaceful and fertile mother of its abundant fruits. Their own neighbourhood spoke the manifest favour of these benignant deities, in its rich fields, waving with harvests, its flowery and luxurious meadows, and in the mild and genial temperature of the air. A city so blessed by its tutelary gods, in prudence, as well as in justice, would expel those traitorous citizens whose impiety endan-

* Lactant., De Morte Persecut., cap. xxxvii.

† Burton, Lect. on Eccles. Hist., lect. xxx. The Emperor persisted in his cruel course; and is said to have condescended to an ingenious artifice to afflict the tender consciences of some persons of the higher orders who escaped less painful penalties. His banquets were served with victims previously slain in sacrifice; and his Christian guests were thus unconsciously betrayed into a crime, which the authority of St. Paul had not yet convinced the more scrupulous believers to be a matter of perfect indifference. (Milman.)

‡ Euseb., Hist. Eccles., lib. ix., cap. 6.

§ The circle of writers who opposed the Gospel is closed by Hierocles, the Governor of Bithynia, and afterwards of Alexandria, who chose for his attack on Christianity the season when persecution against the Christians was in full operation; a time which a man of tender feelings and noble sentiments would have been the last to choose. It was also peculiarly unbecoming in Hierocles to set himself up as a teacher of the Christians; for he was himself the founder of the persecution, and bore a principal share in it. And yet he lays pretences to an impartial love of truth, and kindly feelings towards the faithful; for he entitles his work, "A truth-loving Discourse, addressed to the Christians." (!!) He brought forward again much which had been said by Celsus and Porphyry, and allowed himself to indulge in the most shameless falsehoods about the history of Christ. (Neander.)

‖ Euseb., Hist. Eccles., lib. ix., cap. ult.; Epiphan. Hæres., lib. lxviii., cap. 1.

gered these blessings, and would wisely purify its walls from the infection of their heaven-despising worshippers. Now, all this rhapsodic language reads well in poetry and in fiction; but how speedily did Maximinus behold the fine prospects of his own creation covered with a dark and portentous cloud! He experienced a truth-stirring reverse. Peace and prosperity by no means ensued upon the depression of the Christian name. Notwithstanding the embellishment of the heathen temples, the restoration of the polytheistic ceremonial in more than ordinary pomp, and the nomination of the noblest citizens to the pontifical offices, every kind of calamity, tyranny, war, pestilence, and famine, depopulated the Asiatic provinces.* Foxe, however, asserts, that although the Emperor's answer to the inhabitants of Tyre boasted of prosperity and plenty during the time of the persecution of the Christians, there suddenly befell unseasonable famine, drought, and pestilence in the country; and if we take into consideration the war with the Armenians, all was found to be untrue, respecting which he had so loudly boasted. During this famine and pestilence the inhabitants were greatly decreased: one measure of wheat was sold for two thousand five hundred pieces of money termed "Attic drachms."† By reason of this scarcity, a great number of persons died in the cities, but many more in the country and villages; so that part of the husbandmen, and other inhabitants of the country, perished on account of the famine and the pestilence.‡ Many there were who, producing their most valuable treasures, were glad to give them for any kind of sustenance, no matter how small in quantity. Others, disposing of their possessions, were soon reduced to a state of poverty and want. Some, eating grass and devouring unwholesome herbs, were glad to satiate their appetite with such food as tended not only to injure, but to poison and destroy. A number of reputable women, and of good family, in the various cities, having been reduced to extreme misery and pauperism, were constrained to come forth and crave from the passengers in the

* Milman, History of Christianity, vol. ii., p. 293.

† Euseb., Hist. Eccles., lib. ix., cap. 8. "The two thousand five hundred Attic drachms would amount to about £36. The *medimnus*, or measure, contained six *modii*, or a little more than six pecks. Four Attic drachms were equal to about half-a-crown." But in this statement Eusebius is evidently mistaken: a measure of wheat at two thousand five hundred attics (drachms) would amount to nearly £80.

‡ "Throughout the dominions of Maximin the summer rains did not fall, a sudden famine desolated the whole East, corn rose to an unprecedented price. Some large villages were entirely depopulated, many opulent families were reduced to beggary, and persons in a decent station sold their children as slaves. The rapacity of the Emperor aggravated the general misery. The granaries of individuals were seized, and their stores closed up by the imperial seal. The flocks and herds were driven away, to be offered in unavailing sacrifices to the gods. The court of the Emperor, in the meantime, insulted the general suffering by its excessive luxury; his foreign and barbarian troops lived in a kind of free quarters, in wasteful plenty, and plundered on all sides with perfect impunity. The scanty and unwholesome food produced its usual effect, a pestilential malady. Carbuncles broke out all over the bodies of those who were seized with the disorder; but particularly attacked the eyes, so that multitudes became helplessly and incurably blind. The houses of the wealthy, which were secure against the famine, seemed particularly marked out by the pestilence. The hearts of all classes were hardened by the extent of the calamity. The most opulent, despairing of diminishing the vast mass of misery, or of relieving the swarms of beggars who filled every town and city, gave up the fruitless endeavour." (Milman.)

market-place the hard-earned but reluctant aid of charity. Others pined and withered like spectres; without breath, reeling and staggering, and, from utter inability to stand upright, fell down in the middle of the streets, and then, lying at their full length with their faces downward, craved a morsel of bread; others, at the last gasp, ready to give up the ghost, and not able to utter any other words, dolefully exclaimed that they were very hungry! Of the more opulent there were many who, being weary with the number of beggars and positive dependants on their bounty, after they had bestowed largely upon them, became themselves callous and hard-hearted, fearing lest they should fall into a similar state themselves. On this account, the market-places, streets, lanes, and alleys were full of dead and naked bodies, which lay cast out and unburied, to the pitiful and grievous sight of those who beheld them. Many were actually eaten of dogs: hence many forthwith commenced slaughtering those animals, lest, becoming rabid, they should fall upon and kill them. In like manner, the pestilence pervading every house, and seizing upon the inhabitants of every rank and age, committed dreadful devastation, especially amongst those who had escaped the famine. Hence the wealthy Governors of provinces, Presidents, and an innumerable company of Magistrates, being more ready, on account of the plenty they enjoyed, to take the infection, were quickly despatched. Thus the miserable multitude being destroyed by famine and pestilence, every place was full of mourning, weeping and wailing were heard in every corner, and, as it was with Egypt in ancient time when visited with a similar plague, "there was not a house where there was not one dead." So that death, by means of famine and pestilence, in a short time broke up and consumed whole households; two or three corpses were conveyed together from the same domicile to the place of interment at one funeral. This was the awful recompence which followed hard upon the vain boastings of Maximinus, which he published in every town and city throughout the empire against the church of Christ. "Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will repay, saith the Lord."*

In the meanwhile it was evident to all, how diligent and charitable the Christians were to the afflicted in their wretched extremity. They only, in this time of general calamity, showed compassion; being engaged daily in waiting upon the sick, and in burying the dead, who by the Heathen would have been utterly forsaken. Many Chris-

* The edicts which followed the celebrated letter addressed to the inhabitants of Tyre, had scarcely reached their destination, when the reverse of the pleasing picture which he drew began to be exhibited. While multitudes were dying, or reduced to the extreme of suffering by famine and disease, the difference between the Christians and the Heathen was very striking. The former were incessant in attending upon the sick, and supplying the wants of the necessitous; and the result, as on similar occasions, was favourable to the spreading of the Gospel. The absence of the evils of war, which was another topic urged by Maximinus, was totally at variance with facts. Eusebius states, that the whole country was in a state of hostility during all the ten years of the persecution. (Euseb., Hist. Eccles., lib. viii., cap. 15.) Travelling by land or water was attended with the greatest danger; and it could hardly have been otherwise, when so many rival Emperors were intriguing against each other. But Maximinus was himself the falsifier of his own words. Early in 312, he marched against the Armenians, and the gods were so far from showing their approbation of his conduct, that he was defeated in person. (Burton.)

tians gathered multitudes together, who were in danger of famine, and distributed quantities of bread among them; and thus they gave occasion to all men to glorify the Christians' God, and to acknowledge them alone to be the true worshippers of the Most High, as their works evidently showed. "Whilst these things," says Eusebius, "were being done, God, the great and celestial defender of his church, who exhibited his indignation and anger against men by these calamities, on account of the excesses committed against us, restored the benign and smiling brightness of his providence towards us, so that, by a most wonderful concurrence of events, the light of his peace again began to shine upon us, as from the midst of the densest darkness; showing plainly to all, that God himself had been the ruler of our affairs at all times; who sometimes, indeed, chastens and visits his people, by various trials, from time to time; but, after he has sufficiently chastened, again exhibits his mercy and kindness to those who trust in him." * The Christians in Armenia, if we may believe later, and in some respects suspicious, accounts,† had suffered severely in the earlier years of the persecution. Athenogenes, Bishop of Sebaste, was memorable among the martyrs;‡ and, at this time, the fame of a Bishop named Gregory was widely spread. He had received his consecration from Leontius, another celebrated Bishop of Cæsarea, in Cappadocia; and it seems to have been the custom for all his successors to do the same.§ Gregory is said to have converted Tiridates, the King of Armenia, to Christianity; and Arsaces, who reigned after him, was likewise a Christian. It was probably the first of these Sovereigns who provoked the hostility of Maximinus. No cause of war is assigned,‖ except the attempts made by the tyrant to force the Armenian Christians to sacrifice; and the result of the campaign was unfavourable to the Romans. Maximinus was perhaps diverted from continuing this war, by the necessity of watching the operations of his colleagues in Europe.¶

In the midst of the great calamity to which allusion has been made, not the least scourge of pagan East was the pagan Emperor himself. Christian writers may have exaggerated—they can scarcely have invented—the vices of Maximinus. His licentiousness violated alike the honour of noble and plebeian families. The eunuchs, the purveyors for his passions, traversed the provinces, marked out those who were distinguished by fatal beauty, and conducted these extraordinary perquisitions with the most insolent indignity: where milder measures would not prevail, force was used. Nor was tyranny content with the gratification of its own licence: noble virgins, after having been dishonoured by the Emperor, were granted in marriage

* Euseb., Hist. Eccles., lib. ix., cap. 8.

† See Annales Baronii ad Ann., 311, No. xx. Sozomen speaks of Armenia having embraced Christianity long before the time of Constantine. Eccles. Hist., lib. ii., cap. 8.

‡ He was probably the person mentioned by Basil, de Spir. Sancto, lib. xxix., cap. lxxiii., p. 62. Cave supposes that he flourished A.D. 196.

§ Niconis de Armen. Relig., Biblioth. Patr., Ed. 1677, tom. xxv., p. 328.

‖ Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. ix., cap. 8.

¶ Burton, Lect. on Eccles. Hist., lect. xxx.

to his slaves: even those of the highest rank were consigned to the loathsome embraces of a barbarian husband. Valeria, the widow of Galerius, and the daughter of Diocletian, was first insulted by proposals of marriage from Maximinus, whose wife was still living; and then compelled to wander through the eastern provinces in the humblest disguise, till at length she perished at Thessalonica, by the still more unjustifiable sentence of Licinius. It must not be forgotten, that the war with Armenia was undertaken in a spirit of persecution. This early Christian kingdom was attached, in all the zeal of recent proselytism, to the new religion. That part which acknowledged the Roman sway was commanded to abandon Christianity, and the legions of Rome were employed in forcing the reluctant kingdom to obedience.*

Though Maxentius had caused Alexander to be killed in the preceding year, and nominally obtained possession of Africa, he did not celebrate his triumph for this victory till 312. He then sent an order to stop the persecution of the Christians; and such a measure was perhaps politic, when hostilities had begun between himself and Constantine, and the latter was contemplating an entrance into Italy with an army. We have already mentioned, that Mensurius, Bishop of Carthage, died before the end of the persecution, and that his place was filled up by Cæcilianus. This appointment led to a most unfortunate schism in the church of Carthage, which lasted for a very long period.† Two other Presbyters, named Botrus and Celeusius, had wished to fill the vacant see; and, with a view to this, they had caused the election to be made at a meeting of only the neighbouring Bishops, without any notice being sent to the Bishops of Numidia. The result was contrary to their expectation; for the choice fell unanimously upon Cæcilianus, who was consecrated Bishop of Carthage by Felix, Bishop of the neighbouring city of Aptemgis. The list of articles belonging to the church, which had been made by Mensurius, when he was summoned before the Magistrate, was now delivered to Cæcilianus, who sent to demand them from the persons with whom they were deposited. These persons did not wish to give them up; and they found the rejected candidates for the bishopric, as well as other members of the church, who had previously opposed Mensurius, willing to join them in a schism against the authority of Cæcilianus. They were also supported by a lady named Lucilla, who was offended with the Bishop for something which he had done to her while he was a Deacon, and who was able to further their schemes by command of a large sum of money. One of the principal leaders of this faction was Donatus, Bishop of Casæ Nigræ, in Numidia, who gave name to the schism of the Donatists, which had its origin in the manner which has been described.‡

* Milman, Hist. of Christianity, vol. ii., p. 294.

† The facts which are mentioned connected with the origin of Donatism, will be found in Optatus, cont. Parmen., lib. i.; August. Collat. Gesta apud Zenophilum; Routh, Reliq. Sacræ, vol. iv., p. 320. Oxon., 1846.

‡ Donatists were ancient schismatics in Africa, so denominated from their leader Donatus. They had their origin about the year 312, when, in the room of Mensurius, who died in that year on his return to Rome, Cæcilianus was elected Bishop of Car-

One of the first acts of the Donatists was to denounce the election of Cæcilianus, as invalid, to Secundus,* Bishop of Nisibis, on the ground that the Numidian Bishops had not been present, and that the Bishop had not been consecrated by Secundus, the Primate of Numidia. We are thus particular in noticing the rise and progress of Donatism, as having been the cause of Christians persecuting Christians, which, ere long, cast an awful blot on the Christian name and profession, and flooded the church herself with the blood of her noblest children. This act of denouncement brought Secundus and nearly seventy other Bishops to Carthage, who avoided holding communion with Cæcilianus, and summoned him to attend a meeting,

thage, and consecrated, without the concurrence of the Numidian Bishops, by those of Africa alone, whom the people refused to acknowledge, and to whom they opposed Majorinus, who accordingly was ordained by Donatus, Bishop of Casæ Nigræ. They were condemned in a Council held at Rome, two years after their separation; and afterwards in another at Arles, the year following; and again at Milan, before Constantine the Great, in 316, who deprived them of their churches, and sent their seditious Bishops into banishment, and punished some of them with death. Their cause was espoused by another Donatus, called "the Great," the principal Bishop of that sect, who, with numbers of his followers, was exiled by order of Constans. Many of them were punished with great severity. However, after the accession of Julian to the throne, in 362, they were permitted to return, and restored to their former liberty. Gratian published several edicts against them, and, in 377, deprived them of their churches, and prohibited all their assemblies. But, notwithstanding the severities they suffered, it appears that they had a considerable number of churches towards the close of this century; but at this time they began to decline, on account of a schism among themselves, occasioned by the election of two Bishops in the room of Parmenian, the successor of Donatus. One party elected Primian, and were called "Primianists;" and another, Maximian, and were called "Maximianists." Their decline was also precipitated by the zealous opposition of Augustine, and by the violent measures which were pursued against them by order of the Emperor Honorius, at the solicitation of two Councils held at Carthage,—the one in 404, and the other in 411. Many of them were fined, their Bishops banished, and some put to death. This sect revived and multiplied under the protection of the Vandals, who invaded Africa in 427, and took possession of this province; but it sunk again under new severities, when their empire was overturned, in 534. Nevertheless, they remained in a separate body till the close of this century, when Gregory, the Roman Pontiff, used various methods for suppressing them. His zeal succeeded, and there are few traces to be found of the Donatists after this period. They were distinguished by other appellations; as, "Circumcelliones, Montenses," or Mountaineers; "Campetes," or "Rupetes," &c. They held three Councils; that of Cita in Numidia, and two at Carthage. The Donatists, it is said, held that baptism conferred out of the church—that is, out of their sect—was null; and, accordingly, they re-baptized those who joined their party from other churches; they also re-ordained their Ministers. Donatus seems likewise to have embraced the doctrines of the Arians; though Augustine affirms that the Donatists, in this point, kept clear of the errors of their leader. (Henderson.)

* Mensurius had abstracted the Scriptures from the church, and substituted for them writings of no value. Secundus was at this time Bishop of Nisibis, in Numidia, and Primate of that district which joined the see of Carthage. Mensurius informed Secundus of his evasion of the imperial decree. Secundus, in reply to his letter, declared that he ought to have submitted to any extremity of suffering, rather than have acted in this manner; and he boasts of his own superior fortitude and resolution. The result, however, proved that his boasting was premature; for he became a *traditor* himself, and was absolved for his offence by the Bishops who met in A.D. 305, or 306, in the Council of Cirta. At that Council many Bishops were found guilty of the same crime; and they mutually confessed and pardoned and absolved each other. They did not acknowledge their ordination to be void. The heads of the subsequently formed Donatist party were present; none of whom, after their mutual accusations, and mutual absolutions, affirmed that they had ceased to be Bishops of the church of Christ. Immediately after their accepting pardon from each other, they ordained Sylvanus to be Bishop of Cirta, and separated. The Acts of the Council are to be found in the third book of Augustine against Cresconius. (Rev. George Townsend.)

where his case should be investigated. Cæcilianus declined attending; and the Council, as it styled itself, proceeded to annul his election. They brought two charges against him. The first was, that he had been consecrated by *traditores;* that is, by Bishops who had delivered up something belonging to the church during the persecution: the second was, that, while he was a Deacon, he had hindered relief being conveyed to the Christians who were in prison. The first of these charges was the more extraordinary, because it was notorious that Secundus, and the other Bishops who attended the Council of Cirta, in 305, (many of whom were now present at Carthage,) had confessed themselves *traditores*. Cæcilianus offered to be consecrated again, in the presence of these Bishops, if it could be proved that his former consecration was invalid; and it was shown to be the custom for the Bishop of Carthage to be consecrated by a Bishop of one of the nearest sees, and not by a Bishop of Numidia, in the same manner as the Bishop of Rome was consecrated by the Bishop of Ostia.* The Council took no notice of these arguments and proposals, but proceeded, in defiance of all precedent, and to the destruction of ecclesiastical discipline, to elect another Bishop for the see of Carthage. Their choice fell upon Majorinus, who stood upon the interest of Lucilla,† and received his consecration from Silvanus, Bishop of Cirta, who, from being one of the *traditores*, was not competent to assist in such a ceremony. From this time the Donatists, as they were afterwards called, continued for several years to elect a Bishop of their own; although Cæcilianus and his successors were recognised by the general, or, in other words, the Catholic, Church, as the legitimate Bishops of Carthage.

Throughout the whole of the West, and in that part of the Eastern empire which was under Licinius, the favourable sentiments of Constantine towards those of the Christian faith, the indifference of Maxentius, and the edict of Galerius, preserved in a considerable

* The ordination of a Bishop by three Bishops was the common rule and practice of the Church: yet this was not simply and absolutely necessary to the essence of ordination; for the Church many times admitted the ordination of Bishops, who had been consecrated by one or two Bishops only. Sidærius, Bishop of Palæbisca, was ordained by one Bishop; yet Athanasius not only allowed his ordination, and confirmed it, but, finding him to be a useful man, he afterwards advanced him, as Synesius says, to the metropolitical see of Ptolemais. Paulinus, Bishop of Antioch, ordained Evagrius, his successor, without any other Bishop to assist him, which though it was done against the canon, yet Theodoret assures us that both the Bishops of Rome and Alexandria owned Evagrius as a true Bishop, and never in the least degree questioned the validity of his ordination. (Bingham, Antiquities, book ii., chap. xi., sect. 15.)

† There was at Carthage a Christian lady, named Lucilla, who was reproved by Cæcilianus for superstition, in retaining and kissing, before she proceeded to the eucharist, the bones of a certain person whom she called a martyr. Lucilla was indignant at the reproof, and her anger appeared as one cause of the subsequent commotion. "Ante eucharistiæ usum ossa alicujus martyris, si modo martyris, deosculari solebat." Mr. Butler does not condemn Lucilla for kissing the bones, but for doing so when he had not been acknowledged to have been a martyr by the Pastors of the Church. To prevent abuses and superstition, it was always, he says, a necessary law in the Church, that without the Bishops' approbation no private persons should be allowed to pay to relics the honour due to martyrs. This might prevent superstition when it was independent of the priestcraft; but how must it have been increased, when sanctioned by priestcraft! The plant might not grow in the open air; it would, indeed, soon have perished there; it must only grow in the hot-house of the Bishops' approbation.

degree the Christians from open and direct persecution. The cruelties, extortions, and brutalities of Maxentius, made every Roman his enemy; but his powerful army might long have secured him from the resentment of his degraded subjects, had he not recklessly provoked Constantine to war. Neither should it be forgotten that Maximinus had for some time been carrying on a secret correspondence with Maxentius, and urging him to hostilities with Constantine. That Prince was not rash in engaging in a contest which could not but be dangerous to him; but all attempts at negotiating failing, and Maxentius plainly indicating his purpose of making himself sole Monarch of the West, self-defence forced Constantine into active measures of hostility. Though Constantine might view the conduct of Maxentius with abhorrence, and the situation of the Romans with compassion, we have little reason to imagine that he would have taken up arms to punish the one, or to relieve the other, had not the grasping ambition of the tyrant compelled him to make his descent into Italy. After the death of Herculeus, his titles, according to the established custom, had been erased, and his statues thrown down with ignominy. His son, who had deserted and persecuted him when alive, affected to display the most pious regard for his memory, and gave orders that a similar treatment should be immediately inflicted on all the statues that had been erected in Italy and Africa to the honour of Constantine.* That prudent Prince, who sincerely wished to decline a war, with the difficulty and importance of which he was fully acquainted, at first dissembled the insult, and sought for redress by the milder expedients of negotiation, till he was convinced that the hostile and ambitious designs of the Italian Emperor could only be met by some fearful struggle. He had already prepared a very considerable force to invade the Gallic provinces on the side of Rhætia; and though he could not expect any assistance from Licinius, he was flattered with the hope that the legions of Illyricum, allured by his presents and promises, would desert the standard of that Prince, and unanimously declare themselves his soldiers and subjects. Constantine no longer hesitated. He had deliberated with caution: he acted with vigour. He gave a private audience to the ambassadors, who, in the name of the Senate and the people, conjured him to deliver Rome from a detested tyrant; and, without regarding the timid remonstrances of his council, he

* In the commencement of the war with Maxentius, Constantine appears to have been at a loss to what god he should trust himself and his affairs. He at length determined to honour that one God only whom his father had worshipped, and to show no reverence to the ancient Roman deities. The grounds on which he came to this decision were, namely, the good fortune of his father who had adhered to this worship, and the ill fortune and deplorable end of Diocletian, Galerius, Herculeus, and other Emperors who had worshipped the pagan deities; and, according to Eusebius, (De Vitâ Const., lib. i., cap. 28,) he knew so little of the God of his father, that he prayed he might be able to know him. He was a Deist of the lowest class, who considered the God of his father as a limited being, though more benevolent and powerful than any of the Greek and Roman deities. This is manifest from his regulations in favour of the Christians, and from his laws tolerating the pagan *haruspices*. (Codex Theod., lib. ix., tit 16, leg. 1, 2; also, lib. xvi., tit. 10, leg. 1; compare Zosimus, lib. ii, p. 10, Ed. Oxon., 1679, 8vo.; see also Mosheim, Comment. de Rebus Christ.) It is, however, certain, that in the first years after his victory over Maxentius, he had very incorrect ideas of Christ and of the Christian religion.

resolved to prevent the enemy, and to carry the war into the heart of Italy.

The enterprise, says the historian Gibbon, was as full of danger as of glory; and the unsuccessful event of two former invasions was sufficient to inspire the most serious apprehensions. The veteran troops who revered the name of Herculeus, had embraced in both those wars the party of his son, and were now restrained by a sense of honour, as well as of interest, from entertaining an idea of a second desertion. Maxentius, who considered the Prætorian guards as the firmest defence of his throne, had increased them to their ancient establishment; and they composed, including the rest of the Italians who were enlisted into his service, a formidable body of fourscore thousand men. Forty thousand Moors and Carthaginians had been raised since the reduction of Africa. Even Sicily furnished its proportion of troops; and the armies of Maxentius amounted to one hundred and seventy thousand foot, and eighteen thousand horse. The wealth of Italy supplied the expenses of the war; and the adjacent provinces were exhausted, to form immense magazines of corn and every other kind of provisions. The whole force of Constantine consisted of ninety thousand foot, and eight thousand horse;* and as the defence of the Rhine required an extraordinary attention during the absence of the Emperor, it was not in his power to employ above half his troops in the Italian expedition, unless he sacrificed the public safety to his private quarrel. At the head of forty thousand soldiers, he marched to encounter an enemy whose numbers were nearly five times superior to his own. But the armies of Rome, placed at a secure distance from danger, were enervated by indulgence and luxury. Habituated to the baths and theatres of Rome, they took the field with reluctance, and were chiefly composed of veterans who had almost forgotten, or of new levies who had never acquired, the use of arms and the practice of war. The hardy legions of Gaul had long defended the frontiers of the empire against the barbarians of the North;† and in the performance of that laborious service, their valour was exercised, and their discipline confirmed. There appeared the same difference between the leaders, as between the armies. Caprice or flattery had tempted Maxentius with the hopes of conquest; but these aspiring hopes soon gave way to the habits of pleasure and the consciousness of his inexperience. The intrepid mind of Constantine had been trained from his earliest youth to war, to action, and to military command.

* Zosimus (lib. ii., p. 86) has given us this curious account of the forces on both sides. He makes no mention of any naval armaments, though we are assured, (Panegyric. Vet., lib. ix., cap. 25,) that the war was carried on by sea, as well as by land; and that the fleet of Constantine took possession of Sardinia, Corsica, and the ports of Italy.

† While therefore he regarded the entire world as one immense body, and perceived that the head of it all, the royal city of the Roman empire, was bowed down by the weight of a tyrannous oppression; at first he left the task of liberation to those who governed the other divisions of the empire, as being his superiors in point of age. But when none of these proved able to afford relief, and those who had attempted it had experienced a disastrous termination of their enterprise, he said that life was without enjoyment to him as long as he saw the imperial city thus afflicted, and prepared himself for the effectual suppression of the tyranny. (Euseb., De Vita Const., lib. i., cap. 26.)

The enemy of Maxentius was all activity and vigour, and he crossed the Alps with forty thousand men. In the age of Constantine, the peasants of the mountains were a different race of people from what they were in the day of Hannibal: they were comparatively civilized and obedient subjects; the country was plentifully stocked with provisions, and the stupendous highways which the Romans had carried over the Alps opened several communications between Gaul and Italy. Constantine followed the road of the Cottian Alps, or, as it is now called, of Mount Cenis, and led his troops with such active diligence, that he descended into the plain of Piedmont before his enemy knew that he had left Gaul; a celerity of which there had been no example since the times of Severus, or even of Julius Cæsar. The city of Susa,* however, which is situated at the foot of Mount Cenis, was surrounded with walls, and provided with a garrison sufficiently numerous to check the progress of an invader; but the impatience of Constantine's troops disdained the tedious forms of a siege. The same day that they appeared before Susa, they applied fire to the gates, and ladders to the walls, and, mounting to the assault amidst a shower of stones and arrows, they entered the place sword in hand, and cut in pieces the greater part of the garrison. The flames were extinguished by the care of Constantine, and the remains of Susa preserved from total destruction. About forty miles from thence, a more severe contest awaited him. A numerous army of Italians was assembled under the Lieutenants of Maxentius, in the plains of Turin. Its principal strength consisted in a species of heavy cavalry, which the Romans, since the decline of their discipline, had borrowed from the nations of the East. The horses, as well as the men, were clothed in complete armour, the joints of which were artfully adapted to the motions of their bodies. The aspect of this cavalry was formidable, their weight almost irresistible; and, as on this occasion their Generals had drawn them up in a compact column or wedge, with a sharp point, and with spreading flanks, they flattered themselves that they should easily break and trample down the army of Constantine. They might perhaps have succeeded in their design, had not their experienced adversary embraced the same method of defence, which in similar circumstances had been practised by Aurelian. The skilful evolutions of Constantine divided and baffled this massive column of cavalry. The troops of Maxentius fled in confusion towards Turin; and as the gates of the city were shut against them, very few escaped the sword of the victorious pursuers. By this important service, Turin deserved to experience the clemency and even favour of the conqueror. He made his entry into the imperial palace of Milan, and almost all the cities of Italy between the Alps and the Po, not only acknowledged the power, but embraced with zeal the party, of Constantine. †

* Susa is a province of the Sardinian states, in Piedmont, consisting of a broad valley interspersed with steep rocks. It has an area of seven hundred square miles, with sixty-five thousand inhabitants. The town Susa possesses a very strong fort. It is near a triumphal arch to the honour of Augustus Cæsar.

† Zosimus, as well as Eusebius, hasten from the passage of the Alps to the decisive action near Rome. We must apply to the two Panegyrics for the intermediate actions of Constantine.

From Milan to Rome, continues Gibbon, the Æmilian and Firmilian highways offered an easy march of about four hundred miles; but though Constantine was impatient to encounter the tyrant, he prudently directed his operations against another army of Italians, who, by their strength and position, might either oppose his progress, or, in case of a misfortune, might intercept his retreat. Ruricius Pompeianus, a General distinguished by his valour and ability, had under his command the city of Verona, and all the troops that were stationed in the province of Venetia. As soon as he was informed that Constantine was advancing towards him, he detached a large body of cavalry, which was defeated in an engagement near Brescia, and pursued by the Gallic legions as far as the gates of Verona. The necessity, the importance, and the difficulties of the siege of Verona, immediately presented themselves to the sagacious mind of Constantine.* The city was accessible only by a narrow peninsula towards the west, as the other three sides were surrounded by the Adige, a rapid river, which covered the province of Venetia, from whence the besieged derived an inexhaustible supply of men and provisions. It was not without great difficulty, and after several fruitless attempts, that Constantine found means to pass the river at some distance above the city, and in a place where the torrent was less violent. He then encompassed Verona with strong lines, pushed his attacks with prudent vigour, and repelled a desperate sally of Pompeianus. That intrepid General, when he had used every means of defence that the strength of the place or that of the garrison could afford, secretly escaped from Verona, anxious not for his own but for the public safety. With indefatigable diligence he soon collected an army sufficient either to meet Constantine in the field, or to attack him if he obstinately remained within his lines. The Emperor, attentive to the motions, and informed of the approach, of so formidable an enemy, left a part of his legions to continue the operations of the siege, whilst, at the head of those troops on whose valour and fidelity he more particularly depended, he advanced in person to engage the General of Maxentius. The army of Gaul was drawn up in two lines, according to the usual practice of war; but their experienced leader, perceiving that the number of the Italians far exceeded his own, suddenly changed his disposition, and, reducing the second, extended the front of his first line to a just proportion with that of the enemy. Such evolutions, which only veteran troops can execute without confusion in a moment of danger, commonly prove decisive; but as this engagement began towards the close of the day, and was contested with great obstinacy during the whole night, there was less room for the conduct of the Generals than for the courage of the soldiers. The return of light displayed the victory of Constantine, and a field of carnage covered with many thousands of the vanquished Italians. Their General, Pompeianus, was found

* The Marquis Maffei has examined the siege and battle of Verona with that degree of attention and accuracy which was due to a memorable action that happened in his native country. The fortifications of that city, constructed by Gallienus, were less extensive than the modern walls, and the amphitheatre was not included within their circumference. (See Verona Illustrata, part i., pp. 142—150.)

among the slain : Verona immediately surrendered at discretion, and the garrison became prisoners of war.* When the officers of the victorious army congratulated their master on this important success, they ventured to add some respectful complaints, of such a nature, however, as the most jealous Monarchs will listen to without displeasure. They represented to Constantine that, not content with all the duties of a commander, he had exposed his own person with an excess of valour which almost degenerated into rashness ; and they conjured him for the future to pay more regard to the preservation of a life, in which the safety of Rome and of the empire was involved.

While these important movements were taking place, and Constantine had taken possession of the important city of Verona, the Sovereign of Italy appeared insensible to the dangers and calamity of a civil war which raged in the heart of his dominions, and pleasure was still the only business of Maxentius. Concealing, or at least attempting to conceal, from the public knowledge the misfortunes of his arms, he indulged himself in a vain confidence, which deferred the remedies of the approaching evil, without deferring the evil itself. The rapid progress of Constantine did not awaken him from this fatal security : he flattered himself, that his well-known liberality, and the majesty of the Roman name, which had already delivered him from two invasions, would dissipate with the same facility the rebellious army of Gaul. The officers of experience and ability, who had served under the banners of Herculeus, were at length compelled to inform his effeminate son of the imminent danger to which he was reduced : and, with a freedom that at once surprised and convinced him, to urge the necessity of preventing his ruin, by a vigorous exertion of his remaining power. The resources of Maxentius, both of men and money, were still considerable.† The Prætorian guards felt how strongly their own interest and safety were connected with his cause ; and a third army was soon collected, more numerous than those which had been lost in the battles of Turin and Verona. It was far from the intention of the Emperor to lead his troops in person. A stranger to the exercises of war, he trembled at the apprehension of so dangerous a contest ; and, as fear is commonly superstitious, he listened with melancholy attention to the rumours of omens and presages which seemed to menace his life and empire. Shame at length supplied the place of courage, and forced him to take the field. He was unable to sustain the contempt of the Roman people. The circus resounded with their indignant clamours, and they tumultuously besieged the gates of the palace, reproaching the pusillanimity of their indolent Sovereign, and celebrating the heroic spirit of Constantine. Before Maxentius left Rome he consulted the Sibylline books. The guardians of these sacred oracles were as well versed in

* They wanted chains for so great a multitude of captives, and the whole council was at a loss ; but the sagacious conqueror, it is said, imagined the expedient of converting into fetters the swords of the vanquished !

† Nevertheless, if there be any truth in the scarcity mentioned by Eusebius, that "the inhabitants of Rome were reduced to the most extreme penury and want of necessary food, a scarcity such as our contemporaries do not remember ever before to have existed at Rome," the imperial granaries must have been open only to the soldiers.

the arts of this world, as they were ignorant of the secrets of fate; and they returned him a very prudent answer,* which might adapt itself to the event, and secure their reputation, whatever should be the chance of arms. Constantine always apprehended that the tyrant would consult the dictates of fear,† and perhaps of prudence; and that, instead of risking his last hopes in a general engagement, he would shut himself up within the walls of Rome. His ample magazines secured him against the danger of famine; and as the situation of Constantine admitted not of delay, he might have been reduced to the sad necessity of destroying with fire and the sword the imperial city, the noblest reward of his victory, and the deliverance of which had been the motive of the civil war. It was with equal surprise and pleasure, that on his arrival at a place called Saxa Rubra,‡ about

* "The answers given by the heathen oracles were frequently very delusive, and capable of a contrary interpretation; and the most celebrated of them concealed their meaning in such ambiguous terms, that they required another oracle to explain them. Of this ambiguity several authentic instances are recorded. Thus, when Crœsus consulted the oracle at Delphi, relative to his intended war against the Persians, he was told that he would destroy a great empire. This he naturally interpreted of his overcoming the Persians, though the oracle was so framed as to admit of an opposite meaning. Crœsus made war against the Persians, and was ruined; and the oracle continued to maintain its credit. The answer given to Pyrrhus, King of Epirus, many ages after, was of yet more doubtful interpretation, being conceived in terms so ambiguous, that it might either be interpreted thus: 'I say, that thou, son of Æacus, canst conquer the Romans. Thou shalt go, thou shalt return, never shalt thou perish in war;' or thus: 'I say that the Romans can conquer thee, son of Æacus. Thou shalt go, thou shalt never return, thou shalt perish in war.' Pyrrhus understood the oracle in the former sense; he waged an unsuccessful war with the Romans, and was overcome; yet still the juggling oracle saved its credit. Another remarkable instance of the ambiguity of the pretended Prophets occurs in 1 Kings xxii. 5, 6. Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, and Ahab, King of Israel, having united their forces against the Syrians, in order to recover Ramoth-Gilead; the latter Monarch 'gathered the *false* Prophets together, about four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall I go against Ramoth-Gilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, Go up, for the Lord shall deliver it into the hands of the King.' It is to be observed, that the word 'it' is not in the original, and that the reply of the pseudo-Prophets is so artfully constructed, that it might be interpreted either for or against the expedition; as thus,—'The Lord will deliver' (it) Ramoth-Gilead 'into the King's hand' (Ahab's); or, 'The Lord will deliver' (Israel) 'into the King's hand,' that is, into the hands of the King of Syria. Relying upon this ambiguous oracle, the Monarchs of Judah and Israel engaged the Syrians, and were utterly discomfited." (Horne, Introduction, vol. i., p. 276, ninth edit.)

† Maxentius, understanding of the coming of Constantine, and trusting more to his devilish art of magic than to the good-will of his subjects, which he little deserved, durst not show himself out of the city, nor encounter with him in the open field, but with privy garrisons laid wait for him by the way in sundry straits, as he should come; with whom Constantine had divers skirmishes, and by the power of the Lord did ever vanquish them, and put them to flight. (Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. ix., cap. 9; De Vita Constant., lib. i., cap. 26, 37.) Notwithstanding, Constantine yet was in no great comfort, but in care and dread in his mind, (approaching now near unto Rome,) for the magical charms and sorceries of Maxentius, wherewith he had vanquished before Severus, sent by Galerius against him, which made Constantine the more afraid. (Foxe, Acts and Monuments, vol. i., p. 248, Seeley's 8vo. edit.) "The crowning-point of the tyrant's wickedness," says Eusebius, (De Vita Const., lib. i., cap. 36,) "was his having recourse to sorcery; sometimes, for magic purposes, opening women with child; at other times searching into the bowels of new-born infants. He slew lions also, and practised certain horrid arts for evoking demons, and averting the approaching war, hoping by these means to make himself secure of victory."

‡ Saxa Rubra was in the neighbourhood of the Cremera, a trifling rivulet, memorable by the valour and glorious death of the three hundred Fabii. The post which Maxentius had taken, with the Tiber in his rear, is very clearly described by the two Panegyrists, lib. x., cap. 28; lib. ix., cap. 16.

nine miles from Rome, he discovered the army of Maxentius prepared to give him battle. Their long front filled a very spacious plain, and their deep array reached to the banks of the Tiber, which covered their rear, and forbade their retreat. We are informed, and we may believe, that Constantine disposed his troops with consummate skill; and that he chose for himself the post of honour and of danger. Distinguished by the splendour of his arms, he charged in person the cavalry of his rival; and his irresistible attack determined the event of the day. The cavalry of Maxentius was principally composed either of unwieldy cuirassiers, or of light Moors and Numidians. They yielded to the vigour of the Gallic horse, which possessed more activity than the one, more firmness than the other. The defeat of the two wings left the infantry without any protection on its flanks, and the undisciplined Italians fled without reluctance from the standard of a tyrant whom they had always hated, and whom they no longer feared. The Prætorians, conscious that their offences were beyond the reach of mercy, were animated by revenge and despair. Notwithstanding their repeated efforts, those brave veterans were unable to recover the victory: they obtained, however, an honourable death; and it was observed, that their bodies covered the same ground which had been occupied by their ranks. The confusion then became general; and the dismayed troops of Maxentius, pursued by an implacable enemy, rushed by thousands into the deep and rapid stream of the Tiber. The Emperor himself attempted to escape back into the city over the Milvian bridge; but the crowds which pressed together through that narrow passage forced him into the river, where he was immediately drowned by the weight of his armour.* His body, which had sunk

* A rumour prevailed, that Maxentius, who had not taken any precaution for his own retreat, had contrived a very artful snare to destroy the army of the pursuers; but that the wooden bridge, which was to have been loosened on the approach of Constantine, unluckily broke down under the weight of the flying Italians. Maxentius, "being constrained by force to issue out of the city, sendeth all his power to join with him in the field beyond the river Tiber; where Maxentius craftily breaking down the bridge called 'Pons Milvius,' caused another deceitful bridge to be made of boats and wherries being joined together, and covered over with boards and planks, in the manner of a bridge, thinking therewith to take Constantine as in a trap. But herein came to pass that which in the seventh Psalm is written, 'He made a pit and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made; his mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate:' which here in this Maxentius was rightly verified; for after the two hosts did meet, he, being not able to sustain the force of Constantine fighting under the cross of Christ against him, was put to such a flight, and driven to such an exigence, that, in retiring back upon the same bridge which he did lay for Constantine, (for haste, thinking to reach the city,) he was overturned by the fall of his horse into the bottom of the flood, and there, with the weight of his armour, he, and a great part of his beaten men, were drowned; representing unto us the like example of Pharaoh and his host drowned in the Red Sea, who not unaptly seemeth to bear a prophetical figuration of this Maxentius. For as the children of Israel were in long thraldom and persecution in Egypt under tyrants there, till the drowning of this Pharaoh their last persecutor, so was this Maxentius the last persecutor in the Roman monarchy of the Christians; whom this Constantine, fighting under the cross of Christ, did vanquish, and set the Christians at liberty, who before had been persecuted now three hundred years in Rome. Wherefore, as the Israelites with their Moses, at the drowning of Pharaoh, sang gloriously unto the Lord, who miraculously had cast down the horse and horsemen into the sea, so, no less rejoicing and exceeding gladness was here, to see the glorious hand of the Lord Christ fighting with his people, and vanquishing his enemies and persecutors." (Foxe, Acts, &c., vol. i., p. 249, 8vo. edit.)

very deep into the mud, was found with some difficulty the next day. The sight of his head, when it was exposed to the eyes of the people, convinced them of their deliverance, and admonished them to receive, with acclamations of loyalty and gratitude, the fortunate Constantine, who thus achieved by his valour and ability the most splendid enterprise of his life. In the use of victory, Constantine neither deserved the praise of clemency, nor incurred the censure of immoderate rigour. He inflicted the same treatment to which a defeat would have exposed his own person and family,—put to death the two sons of the tyrant, and carefully extirpated his whole race. The most distinguished adherents of Maxentius must have expected to share his fate, as they had shared his prosperity and his crimes; but when the Roman people loudly demanded a greater number of victims, the conqueror resisted, with firmness and humanity, those servile clamours, which were dictated by flattery as well as by resentment. Informers were punished and discouraged; the innocent who had suffered under the late tyranny were recalled from exile, and restored to their estates; and a general act of oblivion quieted the minds, and settled the property, of the people, both in Italy and Africa.

We have been the more prolix in describing this contest, because it was attended with so many advantages towards the Christian faith: it put an end, in a considerable degree, to the shedding of human blood, and obtained much liberty and life to the posterity of many generations. Prior to the expedition of Constantine against Maxentius, we have no proof that he had, *ex animo*, embraced Christianity. For many years previous to his conquest of Rome, he had not abjured Paganism. He obtained a certain victory over the Franks, but condemned the prisoners to the unjust and cruel death of contending with wild beasts in the theatre of Treves. The prisoners met the beasts, and permitted themselves to be torn in pieces without a tear. The virtue of the savage seems to be ever the same,—firmness in bearing pain, and defying his enemies to derive satisfaction from the least exhibition of weakness. The same characteristic marked the North-American warriors at the first discovery of the continent. Christianity softened its converts at a subsequent period; but the native cruelty of Constantine seems never to have been entirely eradicated. Religion frequently ameliorates, without wholly subduing the power of inward evil. We pass by his marriage with Fausta, the daughter of Herculeus; his reception of him in 308; and the defeat of his treachery when he endeavoured to corrupt his troops in 309; the romantic story of the father imploring his daughter to consent to the murder of her husband; her discovering the plot to Constantine, and the unjustifiable fatal blow upon the person of an unconscious slave; with the reproaching of the confronted murderer by his intended victim. We pass by, also, the sacrificing to Apollo, 310, at the station near the Rhine; his embellishing Treves, where he resided; his wars against the barbarians, and the reputation attendant upon his success; the invitations of the citizens of Rome to deliver them from Maxentius, his more oppressive coadjutor in the empire; together with the rapturous manner in which he was welcomed at Autun. These events

have nothing to do with the question of persecution: they prove only his authority and influence in the empire. They contrast most strongly with the rapacity, cruelty, and vileness of the other Emperors. He was virtuous, just, and gentle, despite all his faults, when compared with them; and the time had arrived when his thoughtful and reflecting mind was at length brought to some decision, though not perfect and complete, on the preference of Christianity to Paganism; and he resolved to place himself, if not at the head, as a powerful auxiliary to the support, of the Christian party. The Heathen believed that great temporal success was a proof of the favour of the gods. He had received much prosperity up to this period of his life. He may have attributed his felicity, not to fortune, not to chance, probably not to Apollo, nor the now long exploded Olympus. He might remember the arguments which he must certainly have heard in favour of Christianity. The reflections which arose in his mind appeared to be his own. The Creator of the human mind acts upon the human mind, sometimes, as in the case of the Prophets of old, by an impression more than natural; sometimes by continuing and impressing the trains of thought which present themselves by relative suggestion. He thus acts with the mind by the laws of mind; but whenever a thought so arises, and remains upon the consciousness, the memory, and the conscience, that permanent change of motive, and lasting benefit, are results which justify us in saying, that the Holy Spirit of God is present with that mind. This I believe to have been the case when Constantine forsook the worship of Apollo, to whom he had offered in the preceding year; and resolving to become, to the best of his imperfect knowledge, a Christian, he commanded the figure of the cross to supersede the eagle; and in the following year directed that the soldiers should wear the same emblem on their shields and arms. He told Eusebius that his own temporal success had demonstrated to him, that there was one God and a Providence; though he did not add that Christianity is only that manner in which the providence of God has made provision for the spiritual happiness and improvement of the spirit of man. It is possible that these reflections might occur to Constantine. It certainly appears to have been for his temporal interest that he should now become decided in the moral grounds of his opposition to Maxentius, and prove to the empire, that the war was not a war of ambition, but of virtue against vice, happiness against misery, and of a pure and holy religion against the consecrated impurities and blood-stained altars of the desecrated temples of Juno, Mars, and Venus.*

We have now to ask, What is the conclusion at which we may arrive respecting the cross, which Constantine informed Eusebius he saw on his way from Gaul to Italy to meet Maxentius? Eusebius attributes the conversion of Constantine, to the sort of reasoning on God and providence which we have mentioned; and that his conclusion, after these contemplations, was, to worship the God in whom his father had believed, as the one God; and that, when he was

* Townsend, Ecclesiastical and Civil History, philosophically considered, vol. i., p. 222. London, 1847.

praying to this God, then the celebrated vision was seen. He saw in the afternoon, in the sky, over the sun, after he had prayed to God for assistance in the approaching contest, a shining, an illuminated cross, with the inscription, "By THIS CONQUER." He related the fact to Eusebius, and swore to its truth, while many of the soldiers were yet living. The next night he had a vision to the same effect, and he then ordered the cross to supersede the eagle, and to be engraven on the shields and arms. What are we to think of the story? is the question. Those who wish to know if it were a solar halo, should become acquainted with a certain treatise of Fabricius,* to which we refer our readers, in the margin. In the meantime, let us not hastily dismiss the subject as being a relic of superstition, and utterly unworthy a thought, and thus enlarge the ground for future discussion to the incredulous and the sceptic. Whatever some individuals may think of the reality of the miracle, it must not be set aside as an invention of a later age, nor as a story which cannot be traced to any authentic witness. It is related by Eusebius,† a contemporary historian, who tells us that he had it from Constantine himself, under the sanction of an oath. It was shortly before the decisive battle that the preternatural communication took place.‡ The father of Constantine, as we have already observed, had decidedly favoured the Christians, though there was no evidence of his having embraced their religion. He appears to have seen through the absurdity of polytheism, and to have learnt from the Christians to worship one God. This was certainly the case with Constantine for some time before his conversion;§ and according to the relation which he gave to Eusebius a long time after, he had been praying to this one spiritual Being, and asking him to reveal himself; when, about the middle of the day, and in the presence of the whole army, he saw the figure of a cross, traced in light, and placed above the orb of the sun, with these words near it, "Hac vince." The Emperor and his army, as might be supposed, were astounded at this vision; and in the following night Jesus Christ appeared to Constantine with the same figure of the cross, and told him to make a copy of what he had seen, and use it in combat with the enemy. From this time the imperial standards bore a device‖ which was composed of the first two letters of the name of Christ in Greek, which were so placed as to resemble a cross.¶

* The treatise of Fabricius, De Cruce quam vidit Constantinus Magnus, is found in his Bibliotheca Græca. He gives many engraved representations of the form in which it might have appeared. It is well known that this incident has been warmly contested, and that the truth of the narrative has led to much discussion. It would occupy too much space were we to attempt to enumerate even the writings to which the controversy has given origin. A good synopsis of the subject may be seen in Walsh's Hist. Novi Test., p. 1564.

† Euseb., De Vita Constant., lib. i., cap. 28.

‡ The time is fixed by Lactantius, (De Mort. Persecut., cap. 44,) who is not contradicted by Eusebius, though the latter has been quoted as placing the event earlier. The testimony of Artemius (Apud Metaphrast., d. 20 Octob.) agrees with Lactantius. Others have laid the scene in France.

§ Euseb., De Vita Constant., lib. i., cap. 17, 28.

‖ The device seems to have been of this kind. He is not said to have seen the *sign*, or *form*, of a real cross, but the Greek letter X intersected perpendicularly by the letter P.

¶ Burton, Lect. Eccles. Hist., lect. xxx.

Such is the celebrated story of the appearance of the cross to Constantine; and what we have stated above will show, that if there were nothing miraculous, Constantine was either deceived, or was himself a deceiver. If we adopt the former hypothesis, the Christians in his army may have been the guilty persons; and modern experiments have been brought to show, that the effect might be produced by an optical illusion. Whether the Christians in the fourth century were likely to be masters of this secret, so as to practise it upon the whole army, or whether they would have hazarded the experiment, when a failure would have been fatal to their cause, might furnish matter for rational inquiry; but the notion of an optical illusion might also be maintained by our supposing the spectators to have witnessed a natural phenomenon, which is not very uncommon in the heavens. If we adopt the second hypothesis, the whole story was probably an invention of Constantine. He could not have leagued with the Christians to produce the delusion, because this would imply that he was already converted to their religion, whereas all history is opposed to such a notion: we should therefore conclude, that the cross in the heavens was never really seen, but that Constantine imposed upon the credulity of Eusebius. The latter informs us, that the Emperor gave him the account a long time after the event; but this, perhaps, does not invalidate the testimony. Length of time might cause a person to forget what he had seen, but it could hardly cause him to fancy that he had seen what never really occurred.* If it be said that the Emperor waited till the persons who were with him at the time were likely to be dead, it might be replied, that in that case he would not have added that the whole army witnessed the phenomenon. Constantine was in his thirty-eighth year when the cross is said to have appeared to him; and there must have been in his army many persons younger than himself, who were alive when Eusebius published this account; but there is no evidence of any of them having contradicted the facts which are stated.† We do not see that the writer of history is called upon to give his opinion in a case like the present; but after impartially reviewing all the evidence, we should be inclined to say thus much, that if Constantine had told Eusebius that the cross had been seen only by himself, we should not have ventured to admit the truth of his narration; but when he asserted that the same sight had been witnessed by the whole army, it is difficult to believe that he wilfully invented a falsehood which was so certain to be detected.‡

But, to be more particular: Dr. Jortin gives three opposite opinions: that it was either a miracle, a pious fraud, or a solar halo.

* This notion is maintained at some length by Fabricius, Biblioth. Græca, vol. vi., p. 8, where the reader may find all the authorities concerning this story. For modern writers who have discussed it, see Mosheim, de Rebus ante Const., Sæc. III., sect. vii., p. 978.

† The Acts of Artemius are extant, (Apud Metaphrast., d. 20 Octobris,) who was deprived of his appointment by Julian the Apostate; and he speaks of the cross having been seen by himself, and by many persons who were still serving in the army. But the authority of this document may be doubted. Lactantius mentions the vision in the night, but not the appearance of the cross. (De Mort. Persecut., cap. xliv. See Phot. Cod., 256.)

‡ Burton, Lect. Eccles. Hist., lect. xxx.

Those who wish to learn whether or no it were a solar halo, may study Fabricius.* Those who imagine it was a pious fraud, will doubtless draw their arguments from certain inconsistencies in the future life of Constantine. Those who think it was a miracle, will do well to remember, that there are four very decided objections to this supposition. First, a miracle was not necessary. Christianity was doing its predicted work: it had conquered, and was conquering. The conviction was increasing, that the empire must take refuge in a better religion, at least, than that of Paganism, which consecrated vileness and murder, and changed the rulers of the earth into demons. It cannot be imagined that a miracle should be wrought to allay those anxieties of a wise man, which, with Constantine, were only the sources of that caution and prudence by which he commanded or deserved success. Such a miracle would destroy its own object.† There is no evidence that the event took place at all. Constantine alone saw it. No man of his officers is mentioned as a spectator. No voice was heard, as at the miraculous appearances in the New Testament. He might have believed he saw it; and if he had uttered an exclamation of surprise, or pointed with his hands, many of the courtiers would have remarked whatever their imperial master affirmed he saw. The cloud would be like a camel or a whale, if the Prince thought it resembled either. Another reason against its being regarded as miraculous is, that the incident may be easily explained by interpreting the expression, *an inscription*, saying, "In this overcome," in a wider sense; as if the appearance of the cross seemed to have the meaning.‡ The last reason is, that it is contrary to the

* On the night of the dream before the decisive battle between Constantine and Maxentius, he saw the vision which commanded him to place the labarum on the shields and arms of the soldiers; not on the night of the day on which he first saw the labarum itself. "Horis diei meridianis, sole in occasum vergente, crucis tropæum, in cœlo ex luce conflatum, soli superpositum, ipsis oculis se vidisse, affirmavit, cum hujus modi inscriptione, HAC VINCE." (Euseb., Vit. Constant., lib. i., cap. 28, edit. folio, Reding, p. 515.) This is repeated from Eusebius by Sozomen, lib. i., cap. 3. Other early ecclesiastical histories contain the same story; as, for example, Philostorg., lib. i., cap. 6; Niceph., lib. vii., cap. 29; lib. viii., cap. 3. The sentence will bear (Jortin, Remarks on Eccles. Hist.) this meaning: He saw, that is, believed he saw, a cross over the sun; and it appeared to him when he was thinking of the approaching battle: "Fear not; believe in the cross, and thou shalt conquer." The whole difficulty is in the words γραφην λεγουσαν, a speaking writing, or an inscription appearing to speak. If γραφη may be used, as is supposed, to denote a picture, the difficulty is removed. (See Euseb., De Vita Constant, ed. Reding.)

† Lactantius mentions only the dream; and the same is true of Sozomen, lib. i., cap. 3, and Rufinus in his translation of the Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius; and likewise of the author of the Chronicon Orientale, p. 57. Indeed the appeal of Eusebius to the solemn attestation of the Emperor, (De Vita Const., lib. i., cap. 28,) and the statement of Gelasius Cyzicenus, (Acta Concilii Nicæni, lib. i., cap. 4, in Harduin's Concilia, tom. i., p. 351,) that the whole story was accounted fabulous by the Pagans, confirm the supposition that it was a mere dream. For the appeal of Eusebius would have been unnecessary, and the denial of its reality by the Pagans would have been impossible, if the whole army of Constantine had been eye-witnesses of the event.

‡ Eusebius alone, among the writers of that age, gives us any account of the vision of the cross, though Lactantius and others speak of the dream in which Constantine was directed to use the sign of the cross. Eusebius's account is as follows:—"He conceived that he ought to worship only the God of his father. He therefore called upon this God in prayer, entreating and beseeching him to manifest to him who he was, and to extend his right arm on the present occasion. While he was thus praying with earnest entreaty, a most singular divine manifestation appeared: which, perhaps,

analogy of the appearances mentioned in the Old and New Testament. These were, the flame from heaven manifesting the presence of God, with a voice speaking from the excellent glory. When our Lord appeared, he was seen as the God of the Patriarchs, surrounded with the glory in which, before his incarnation, he had been accustomed to appear. He was thus seen by Stephen at his martyrdom, and by Paul at his conversion. The last time that he appeared was to John, in the isle of Patmos; and there is something very wonderful and awful, that he who had reposed on his bosom at the supper, he who had been his own familiar friend, he upon whom the full powers of the pentecostal inspiration rested, should fall at his feet as dead! No

had another declared it, would not easily be credited: but the victorious Emperor himself having related it to us who write this, when we had, a long time afterwards, the privilege of knowing and conversing with him, and having confirmed it with an oath,—who can hesitate to believe the account? and especially as the subsequent time, or the event which followed, affords evidence of its truth. He said, that about the middle hours of the day, as the sun began to verge towards its setting, he saw in the heavens, with his own eyes, the sun surmounted with the trophy of a cross, which was composed of light, and had a legend annexed, saying, '*By this conquer.*' And amazement seized him and the whole army at the sight, and the beholders wondered, as they accompanied him in the march. And he said he was at a loss what to make of this spectre; and as he pondered and reflected upon it long, night came upon him by surprise. After this, as he slept, the Christ of God appeared to him, together with the sign before seen in the heavens, and bade him make a representation of the sign that appeared in the heavens, and to use that as a protection against the onsets of his enemies. And as soon as it was day, he arose, related the wonder to his friends, and then, assembling the workers in gold and precious stones, he seated himself in the midst of them, and, describing the appearance of the sign, he bade them imitate it in gold and precious stones. This we were once so fortunate as to set our eyes upon." Eusebius then goes into a long description of this sacred standard, which was called the "labarum." Its shaft was a very long spear, overlaid with gold. On its top was a crown composed of gold and precious stones, and containing the sacred symbol, namely, the Greek letter X, intersected with the letter P. Just under this crown was a likeness of the Emperor in gold; and below that, a cross piece of wood, from which hung a square flag, of purple cloth, embroidered and covered with precious stones. Now, if this narrative be all true, and if two connected miracles were actually wrought, as here stated, how happens it, that no writer of that age, except Eusebius, says one word about the luminous cross in the heavens? How came it that Eusebius himself said nothing about it in his Ecclesiastical History, which was written twelve years after the event, and about the same length of time before the Life of Constantine? Why does he rely solely on the testimony of the Emperor, and not even intimate that he ever heard of it from others; whereas, if true, many thousands must have been eye-witnesses of the fact? What mean his suggestions, that some may question the truth of the story; and his caution not to state anything as a matter of public notoriety, but to confine himself simply to the Emperor's private representation to himself? Again, if the miracle of the luminous cross was a reality, has not God himself sanctioned the use of the cross, as the appointed symbol of our religion? so that there is no superstition in the use of it; but the Catholics are correct, and the Protestants in an error on this subject. If God intended to enlighten Constantine's dark mind, and show him the truth of Christianity, would he probably use for this purpose the enigma of a luminous cross, in preference to his inspired word, or a direct and special revelation? Was there no tendency to encourage a superstitious veneration for the sign of the cross in such a miracle? And can it be believed, that Jesus Christ actually appeared to the Emperor in a vision, directing him to make an artificial cross, and to *rely upon that* as his *defence* in the day of battle? But how came the whole story of the luminous cross to be unknown to the Christian world for more than twenty-five years, and then to transpire only through a private conversation between Eusebius and Constantine? Is it not supposable, that Eusebius may have misunderstood the account the Emperor gave him, of a singular halo about the sun which he saw, and of an affecting dream which he had the night after, and which induced him to make the labarum, and use it as his standard? Such are the arguments against this hypothesis. (Soames, Mosheim.)

vision of this nature could be expected by Constantine. No new appearances, other than those already vouchsafed, could be anticipated; and many other reasons also could be adduced to lead us to infer, that the manifestation to Constantine was not miraculous. What then is likely to have been the origin of the Labarum? It was probably an imagination, or a spectral illusion,* similar to that which Colonel Gardiner† is reported to have beheld, when that religious

* "Although it is not probable that we shall ever be able to understand the actual manner in which a person of sound mind beholds spectral apparitions in the broad light of day, yet we may arrive at such a degree of knowledge on the subject, as to satisfy rational curiosity, and to strip the phenomena of every attribute of the marvellous. Even the vision of natural objects presents to us insurmountable difficulties, if we seek to understand the precise part which the mind performs in perceiving them; but the philosopher considers that he has given a satisfactory explanation of vision, when he demonstrates, that distinct pictures of external objects are painted on the retina, and that this membrane communicates with the brain by means of nerves of the same substance as itself, and of which it is merely an expansion. Here we reach the gulf which human intelligence cannot pass; and if the presumptuous mind of man shall dare to extend its speculations further, it will do it only to evince its incapacity and mortify its pride. In his admirable work on this subject, Dr. Hibbert has shown, that spectral apparitions are nothing more than ideas, or the recollected images of the mind, which, in certain states of bodily indisposition, have been rendered more vivid than actual impressions, or, to use other words, that the pictures in the 'mind's eye' are more vivid than the pictures in the body's eye. This principle has been placed by Dr. Hibbert beyond the reach of doubt; but I propose to go much farther, and to show 'the mind's eye' is actually the body's eye, and that the retina is the common tablet on which both classes of impressions are painted, and by means of which they receive their visual existence, according to the same optical laws. Nor is this true merely in the case of spectral illusions: it holds good of all ideas recalled by the memory, or created by the imagination, and may be regarded as a fundamental law in the science of pneumatology. It would be out of place in a work like this, to adduce the experimental evidence on which it rests, or even to explain the manner in which the experiments themselves must be conducted; but I may state in general, that the spectres conjured up by the memory or the fancy, have always 'a local habitation,' and that they appear in front of the eye, and partake in its movements, exactly like the impressions of luminous objects, after the objects themselves are withdrawn. In the healthy state of the mind and body, the relative intensity of these two classes of impressions on the retina, is nicely adjusted. The mental pictures are transient and comparatively feeble, and in ordinary temperaments are never capable of disturbing or effacing the direct images of visible objects. The affairs of life could not be carried on, if the memory were to intrude bright representations of the past into the domestic scene, or scatter them over the external landscape. The two opposite impressions, indeed, could not co-exist: the same nervous fibre which is carrying from the brain to the retina the figures of memory, could not at the same instant be carrying back the impressions of external objects from the retina to the brain. The mind cannot perform two distinct functions at the same instant, and the direction of its attention to one of the two classes of impressions necessarily produces the extinction of the other; but so rapid is the exercise of mental power, that the alternate appearance and disappearance of the two contending impressions, are no more recognised than the successive observations of external objects during the twinkling of the eyelids. If we look, for example, at the façade of St. Paul's, and, without changing our position, call to mind the celebrated view of Mont Blanc from Lyons, the picture of the cathedral, though actually impressed upon the retina, is momentarily lost sight of by the mind, exactly like an object seen by indirect vision; and during the instant the recollected image of the mountain, towering over the subjacent range, is distinctly seen, but in a tone of subdued colouring, and indistinct outline. When the purpose of its recall is answered, it quickly disappears, and the picture of the cathedral again resumes the ascendancy." (Brewster, Letters on Natural Magic.)

† "He thought he saw an unusual blaze of light fall on the book while he was reading, which he at first imagined might happen by some accident in the candle. But, lifting up his eyes, he apprehended, to his extreme amazement, that there was before him, as it were suspended in the air, a visible representation of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross, surrounded on all sides with a glory; and was impressed as if a voice had come to him to this effect, (for he was not confident as to the very words,) 'O sinner, did I suffer this for thee, and are these the returns?' But whether this were

impression on his mind was made, which lasted through life. The most minute circumstance, which is overruled to permanent and spiritual good, may be called miraculous, in the sense of its being unusual and attended with a blessing. But whatever may have been the real history of the appearance of the cross to Constantine, he obtained the victory over the last pagan enemy but one, that still remained to oppose the soldiers of the cross. The final battle with Maxentius was fought nine miles from Rome, in the year 312. Maxentius had been a persecutor both of Pagans and of Christians: the joy, therefore, of the people at his defeat was excessively great. Italy dedicated to Constantine a crown and buckler of gold. Africa established Priests for the worship of his family. The Roman Senate erected a statue of gold in his honour, and the Basilica, and the triumphal arch that still bears his name.* The language of the inscription on the arch, though not Christian, was not so entirely pagan as before: it did not speak of the gods of Olympus, but declared, that by the Divinity Constantine had been enabled to deliver them. Now also was the golden moment when the cross was first raised before the people of Rome, by the ruler of Rome. A statue was erected to him in the public square: the Emperor placed a cross in the hand, with an inscription, declaring that it was by the cross alone he had delivered the city from tyrants, and restored the Senate to its splendour. From the external demonstrations of joy, he proceeded to give them the greatest sources of satisfaction. He disbanded the Prætorian guards. Though he punished some of the adherents of his enemy, he restored others to their forfeited estates, and spared their lives. He discouraged the laws against informers. He restored power to the Senate, and filled its ranks with the best citizens of the empire. He diminished the taxes; he relieved the poor; he embellished the city; he restored many ruined towns to opulence and grandeur, and repaired, to the utmost of his power, the effects of tyranny and war. He was desirous to be regarded as the father of his people, and to be a blessing to his too long oppressed and harassed empire.†

an audible voice, or only a strong impression on his mind equally striking, he did not seem very confident; though, to the best of my recollection," says Dr. Doddridge, "he rather judged it to be the former. Struck with such an amazing phenomenon as this, there remained scarcely any life in him, so that he sank down in the arm-chair in which he sat, and continued, he knew not how long, insensible; (which was one circumstance that made me several times take the liberty to suggest, that he might possibly be all this while asleep;) but however that were, he quickly after opened his eyes, and saw nothing more than usual." (Some remarkable Passages in the Life of the Honourable Colonel James Gardiner, who was slain at the Battle of Preston-Pans. By Philip Doddridge, D.D. 8vo. Edinburgh, 1747.)

* As it was not possible to find in the capital of the empire a sculptor who was capable of adorning that public monument, the arch of Trajan, without any respect either for his memory, or for the rules of propriety, was stripped of its most elegant figures. The difference of times and persons, of actions and characters, was totally disregarded. The Parthian captives appear prostrate at the feet of a Prince who never carried his arms beyond the Euphrates; and curious antiquarians can still discover the head of Trajan on the trophies of Constantine. The new ornaments which it was necessary to introduce between the vacancies of ancient sculpture, are executed in the rudest and most unskilful manner. (Gibbon.)

† Townsend, Ecclesiastical and Civil History philosophically considered, vol. i., p. 227. London, 1847.

Constantine continued in the metropolis about three months, and made himself so popular with the inhabitants, that the Senate passed a decree for placing his name before that of the other Emperors, though Maximinus had taken that honour to himself. Before Constantine marched into Italy, he had secured the friendship, or at least the neutrality, of Licinius, the Illyrican Emperor. He had promised his sister Constantia in marriage to that Prince; but the celebration of the nuptials was deferred till after the conclusion of the war, which threatened both Monarchs; and the interview of the two Emperors at Milan, which was appointed for that purpose, appeared to cement the union of their families and interests. The first edict which Constantine published in favour of the Christians is not extant.* He proceeded to give the sanction of the religious and civil supremacy of the Roman law and magistracy, to the long persecuted Christianity. We should imagine that Constantine thought, that the highest ecclesiastical authority, as well as the highest civil authority, should be united in one person, as they had formerly been in the patriarchal families; of which the government of one person, both as Priest and King, in the monarchies and empires that followed, was the representative and successor. The Emperor forthwith assumed the pontificate. Maximinus and Licinius were his partners in the other divisions of the empire. The former continued an uncompromising enemy to Christianity. Constantine, in conjunction with Licinius, who at present did not oppose him, published at Rome the first edict in favour of freedom of religious worship. It is supposed, however, that it was not expressed in such unreserved language as the edict which followed. Maximinus received the decree with deep, though suppressed, indignation; and he yielded like the bulrush to that which he could not withstand. He published a similar rescript through his division of the empire. He permitted arguments and persuasions only to be used to recover Christians to Paganism. He prohibited all persons from molesting them, and granted liberty of reasoning and of conscience to all.† His withholding from them the permission, which Constantine had granted, of assembling publicly for worship and building churches, rendered them still jealous of his sincerity. Maximinus (and this was a great advance towards the total overthrow of persecution) permitted only that they should not be personally injured for their Christianity.

The war which threatened Constantine and Licinius at Milan, and led them to postpone the contemplated festivities, was an inroad of the Franks which summoned Constantine to the Rhine, and also the hostile approach of Maximinus, the Sovereign of Asia, which demanded the immediate presence of Licinius. Maximinus had been the secret ally of Maxentius, and, without being discouraged by his fate, he resolved to try the fortune of a civil war. He moved out of Syria towards the frontiers of Bithynia in the depth of winter. The season was severe and tempestuous; great numbers of men as well as

* "Quæ autem edicta pro Christianis ipso imperii ingressu Romæ vel aliis in provinciis promulgaverit, non extant." (Baronii Annal., A.D. 312, sect. lxxxviii.)

† This was in the year 313. (See Euseb., Hist. Eccles., lib. x., cap. 5; and the Notes of Valesius upon the Epistle.)

horses perished in the snow; and as the roads were broken up by incessant rains, he was obliged to leave behind him a considerable part of the heavy baggage, which was unable to follow the rapidity of his forced marches. By this extraordinary effort of diligence, he arrived, with a harassed but formidable army, on the banks of the Thracian Bosphorus, before the Lieutenants of Licinius were apprized of his hostile intentions. Byzantium surrendered to the power of Maximinus after a siege of eleven days. He was detained some time under the walls of Heraclea; and he had no sooner taken possession of that city, than he was alarmed by the intelligence, that Licinius had pitched his camp at the distance of only eighteen miles. After a fruitless negotiation, in which the two Princes attempted to seduce the fidelity of each other's adherents, they had recourse to arms. The Emperor of the East commanded a disciplined and veteran army of above seventy thousand men; and Licinius, who had collected about thirty thousand Illyrians, was at first appalled by the superiority of numbers. His military skill, and the firmness of his troops, restored the day, and obtained a decisive victory.* The incredible speed which Maximinus exerted in his flight, is much more celebrated than his prowess in the battle. Twenty-four hours afterwards he was seen, pale, trembling, and without his imperial ornaments, at Nicomedia, one hundred and sixty miles from the place of his defeat. He survived his misfortune only three or four months; and his death, which happened at Tarsus, was variously ascribed to despair, to poison, and to the divine justice. The provinces of the East, delivered from the terrors of civil war, cheerfully acknowledged the authority of Licinius.†

It is, however, much to be regretted, that the cruelties which attach themselves to the name of Maximinus were not suffered to end with his death. It is perhaps true, that he had put many unworthy persons into places of importance; and it was not to be expected that the Governors of cities or provinces, who had seconded the tyrant in all his enormities, should now be continued in office; but the Christian will wish that their lives had been spared. Such, however, of old was not the policy of the conqueror. Many favourites of Maximinus were put to death. The vanquished Emperor had left behind him two children, a boy of about eight, and a girl of about seven, years old. Their inoffensive age might have excited compassion; but the compassion of Licinius was a very feeble resource; nor did it restrain him from extinguishing the name and memory of his adversary. His wife, perhaps, deserved her fate; at least it was a just retribution, when she was drowned in the same stream in which several Christian females had been thrown by her orders.‡ The death of Severianus

* Zosimus mentions the defeat and death of Maximinus as ordinary events; but Lactantius expatiates on them, (De Mort. Persecut., cap. xlv., ad cap. l.,) ascribing them to the miraculous interference of Heaven.

† Gibbon, Decline and Fall, vol. ii., p. 232, 8vo. edit., London.

‡ Before the destruction of the children of Maximinus, "their mother had been thrown into the Orontes, in which river she herself had frequently commanded chaste women to be drowned. So by the unerring and just judgment of God, all the impious received according to the deeds that they had done." (Lactant., De Mort. Persecut., cap. l.)

will admit of no less excuse, as it was dictated neither by revenge nor policy. The conqueror had never received any injury from the father of that unhappy youth; and the short and obscure reign of Severus, in a distant part of the empire, was already forgotten. But the execution of Candidianus was an act of the blackest cruelty and ingratitude. He was the natural son of Galerius, the friend and benefactor of Licinius. The prudent father had deemed him too young to sustain the weight of a diadem; but he hoped that, under the protection of the Princes who were indebted to his favour for the imperial purple, Candidianus might pass a secure and honourable life. He was now advancing towards the twentieth year of his age; and the royalty of his birth, though unsupported either by merit or ambition, was sufficient to exasperate the jealous mind of Licinius. To these innocent and illustrious victims of his tyranny, we must add the wife and daughter of the Emperor Diocletian. When that Prince conferred on Galerius the title of Cæsar, he had given him in marriage his daughter Valeria, whose melancholy adventures might furnish a very singular subject for tragedy. She had fulfilled, and even surpassed, the duties of a wife. As she had not any children herself, she condescended to adopt the illegitimate son of her husband, and invariably displayed towards the unhappy Candidianus the tenderness and anxiety of a real mother. After the death of Galerius, her ample possessions provoked, and her personal attractions excited, the desires of his successor Maximinus.* He had a wife still alive; but divorce was permitted by the Roman law, and the fierce passion of the adulterous persecutor demanded an immediate gratification. The answer of Valeria was such as became the daughter and widow of Emperors; but it was tempered by the prudence which her defenceless condition compelled her to observe. She represented to the persons whom Maximinus had employed on this occasion, "that even if honour could permit a woman of her character and dignity to entertain a thought of second nuptials, decency at least must forbid her to listen

* "That which distinguished his character, and in which he transcended all former Emperors, was his desire of debauching women. What else can I call it but a blind and headstrong passion? Yet such epithets feebly express my indignation in reciting his enormities. The magnitude of the guilt overpowers my tongue, and makes it unequal to its office. Eunuchs and panders made search everywhere; and no sooner was any comely face discovered, than husbands and parents were obliged to withdraw. Matrons of quality and virgins were deprived of their garments, and all their limbs were inspected, lest any part should be unworthy of the bed of the Emperor. Whenever a woman resisted, death by drowning was inflicted upon her; as if, under the reign of this adulterer, chastity had been treason. Some men there were who, beholding the violation of wives whom, for virtue and fidelity, they affectionately loved, could not endure their anguish of mind, and so killed themselves. While this monster ruled, it was singular deformity alone which could shield the honour of any female from his savage desires. At length he introduced a custom prohibiting marriage, unless with the imperial permission; and he made this an instrument to serve the purposes of his lewdness. After having debauched free-born maidens, he gave them for wives to his slaves. His courtiers also imitated the example of the Emperor, and violated with impunity the beds of their dependants. For who was there to punish such offences? As for the daughters of men of middle rank, any who were inclined took them by force. Ladies of quality, who could not be taken in this manner, were petitioned for, and obtained from the Emperor by way of free gift: nor could a father oppose this; for the imperial warrant having been once signed, he had no alternative but to die, or to receive some barbarian as his son-in-law." (Lactant., De Mort. Persecut., cap. xxxviii.)

to his addresses at a time when the ashes of her husband and his benefactor were still warm, and while the sorrows of her mind were still expressed by her mourning garments. She ventured to declare, that she could place very little confidence in the professions of a man whose cruel inconstancy was capable of repudiating a faithful and affectionate wife." On this repulse the professed attachment of Maximinus was converted into fury; and as witnesses and Judges were always at his disposal, it was easy for him to cover his fury with an appearance of legal proceedings, and to assault the reputation as well as the happiness of Valeria. Her estates were confiscated; her eunuchs and domestics devoted to the most inhuman tortures; and several innocent and respectable matrons, who were honoured with her friendship, suffered death, on a false accusation of adultery. The Empress herself, together with her mother Prisca, was condemned to exile; and as they were ignominiously hurried from place to place, before they were confined to a sequestered village in the deserts of Syria, they exposed their shame and distress to the provinces of the East, which, during thirty years, had respected their august dignity. Diocletian made several ineffectual efforts to alleviate the misfortunes of his daughter; and, as the last return that he expected for the imperial purple, which he had conferred upon Maximinus, he entreated that Valeria might be permitted to share his retirement of Salona, and to close the eyes of her afflicted father.* He entreated; but as he could no longer threaten, his prayers were received with coldness and disdain; and the pride of the tyrant was gratified, in treating Diocletian as a suppliant, and his daughter as a criminal. The death of Maximinus seemed to assure the Empresses of a favourable alteration in their fortune. The public disorders relaxed the vigilance of their guard, and they easily found means to escape from the place of their exile, and to repair, though with some precaution, and in disguise, to the court of Licinius. His behaviour in the first days of his reign, and the honourable reception which he gave to young Candidianus, inspired Valeria with a secret satisfaction, both on her own account, and on that of her adopted son. But these grateful prospects were soon succeeded by horror and astonishment; and the bloody executions which stained the palace of Nicomedia sufficiently convinced her, that the throne of Maximinus was filled by a tyrant more inhuman than himself. Valeria consulted her safety by a hasty flight, and, still accompanied by her mother Prisca, they wandered about fifteen months through the provinces, concealed in the disguise of plebeian habits. They were at length discovered at Thessalonica; and, as the sentence of their death was already pronounced, they were immediately beheaded, and their bodies thrown into the sea. The people gazed on the melancholy spectacle; but their grief and indig-

* Diocletian despatched messengers to Maximinus, requesting that his daughter might be sent to him. He could not prevail. Again and again he entreated; yet she was not sent. At length he employed a relation of his, a military man, high in power and authority, to implore the tyrant by the remembrance of past favours. This messenger, equally unsuccessful in his negotiation as the others, reported to Diocletian that his prayers were vain. (Lactant., De Mort. Persecut., cap. xli.)

nation were suppressed by the terrors of a military guard.* Licinius himself, when he was at Antioch, put Theotecnus to the torture, and several persons who had assisted him in imposing upon the people by some miraculous image of Jupiter. They were all put to death; as was Picentius, who had been several times Consul, and the confidential adviser of Maximinus; and Colcianus, who was a great persecutor of the Christians in Egypt.†

While Licinius was executing severe vengeance upon those whom he thought his enemies, Constantine was engaged on subjects which were suited to a Christian Emperor. Between the publication of the decree at Rome in 312, and the month of March, 313, the marriage of Licinius with the sister of the Emperor took place, and also the death of Diocletian,‡ who, though he had long been powerless in his gardens at Salona, might possibly have been restored to the throne as the ancient enemy and persecutor of the Christian faith, which confirmed Constantine in the empire. Probably it was the necessity of caution, and adherence to a prudent polity, which combined with all his efforts in the promotion of Christianity, that led him to hesitate so long before he published what has been termed, "the glorious Magna Charta of religious freedom at Milan." This, however, he accomplished in conjunction with Licinius, of whom it is difficult to say whether he were a Christian or a Pagan.§ In this celebrated decree,‖ he gives to the Christians entire, absolute, unlimited freedom to exercise their public worship. He cancels all the restrictions of former edicts upon their present liberty. He commands the restoration of their churches, and promises that he will defray the expense of their re-conveyance, and all other charges. It did more than all this: it conferred free and absolute permission to all, without exception, by whatever name they might be called, to follow any religion, or any form of worship, according to *their will*, (the word *conscience* does not occur in the decree,) and to practise the rites of their chosen religion without any molestation or interruption from the magistracy or the Emperors. Two reasons have been assigned for this indulgence. One is the promotion of the peace and happiness of the empire; and Christians have always prayed for the peace of the city wherein they dwell. The other is, the hope of pleasing the Deity, whatever his power may be, to whose worshippers the freedom of religion is thus granted. The practices of the Heathen in their temples were necessarily suppressed

* Gibbon, Decline and Fall, vol. i., p. 238, Milman's edit., 8vo.

† Burton, Lect. on Eccles. Hist., lect. xxx.

‡ That Diocletian died in the year 313, and not in 316, as had been supposed by many, is established by Pagi. (Baronii Eccles. Annal., A.D. 316, sect. iii.)

§ It has been controverted whether Licinius ever was a Christian. Cardinal Nois takes the negative, Pagi and Basnage take the affirmative. The truth of the case seems to have been, that he pretended for some time to be a Christian, but never was so; and that finding the Christians to be much more attached to Constantine than to himself, he threw off the mask. (See Basnag., Annal. ii., p. 447; Baronii Annales Eccles. Pagi, A.D. 318, sect. ix.)

‖ The edict of Milan is given by Lactantius in the treatise De Mortibus Persecutorum, cap. xlviii. A corrected translation of it may also be found in Foxe's Acts and Monuments, vol. i., p. 250. Seeley's edit.

some years after, in spite of this edict, in consequence of their scandalous immorality; and the sternest lover of civil and religious liberty would justify the overthrow of the public abominations, and the cruel sacrifices which still resisted the influence of our holier faith.*

Constantine now addressed himself to subjects which were far more suited to the employment of an Emperor, who threw his protecting shield over the Christian name; a line of procedure which must have appeared very strange to those who had watched the usual routine of heathen politics. Africa, as well as Italy, had now fallen naturally under the government of Constantine; and while he was at Milan in the spring of the present year, 313, he wrote to Anulinus, the Proconsul of Africa, impressing upon him the importance of executing the edict which had lately been published. This ordered the restitution of houses or gardens, or any public property, which belonged to the Christians; and the Proconsul was to see that this was done without delay.† At the same time it was settled, that the African Clergy (including those of Numidia and Mauritania) should receive a sum of money from the public treasury.‡ It does not appear that the payment was to be annual, nor is any reason assigned for the favour being granted to Africa; but the Christians in that country had suffered during the usurpation of Alexander, and may therefore have been in a worse condition than their brethren in Italy. Constantine had also written to Ursus, who was the chief Minister of finance for Africa, ordering him to pay a certain sum to Cæcilianus, the Bishop of Carthage; and the Emperor's attention to these affairs is further shown by his writing in person to Cæcilianus. The Bishop was to receive the money, and to distribute it according to a list which was made out for that purpose; and if the sum were not sufficient, he was authorized to draw for more upon the Emperor's private Treasurer. The payment of this money appears to have been made to the African Clergy only; but another letter, which was written shortly after to Anulinus, concerned most probably the whole body of the Clergy. The Proconsul was instructed to announce to the Bishop of Carthage, that all persons engaged in the sacred ministry were to be excused from the burden of any public office.§ This letter was written from Milan in the month of March or April, when Constantine was on the point of setting out for Gaul; and Anulinus lost no time in communicating its contents to Cæcilianus. He seems to have been aware of the schism in the church of Carthage, and coupled his communication with an exhortation to unity; but, unfortunately, it was of little avail. The seeds of the Donatist schism were taking deep root, threatening the church with confusion and even bloodshed. Within a few days, a meeting was held of the persons who supported Majorinus; and they agreed to petition the Proconsul, that the

* Townsend, Civil and Eccles. Hist., &c., vol. i., p. 229.
† Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. x., cap. 5.
‡ Ibid., cap. 6.
§ Ibid., cap. 7.

immunity granted by Constantine to all the Clergy might be extended to themselves. The Emperor had expressly named the Clergy of the Catholic Church, over which Cæcilianus presided; but the Donatists attached another meaning to the Catholic Church,* and sent two papers to the Proconsul; one of which contained a series of charges against Cæcilianus, and the other was an address to the Emperor, requesting him to send some Bishops out of Gaul, who might settle the dispute between the two parties.† Constantine was anxious to put an end to the schism. Accordingly he summoned a Council, composed of Prelates of both parties, and others, in order that all might have the benefit of a full and impartial decision. Donatus, without any hesitation, conducted the part of the schismatics. The Council was held in the palace of the Empress Fausta; the Bishop of Rome, Miltiades,‡ or Melchiades, presided at the head of nineteen Bishops. Cæcilianus was present with his accusers. Donatus was convicted of having caused a schism at Carthage, at a time when Cæcilianus was Deacon only; of having re-baptized several persons, and of having given imposition of hands a second time in the case of certain Bishops who had relapsed in the persecutions. Donatus, finding the proof of these things established against himself, quitted the assembly, and did not again appear; upon which the other accusers of Cæcilianus dropped their charge against him.

In the second session, the charge brought against Cæcilianus was examined into, and proved to be utterly groundless. The decision of the Council of Carthage in 311 (at which seventy Numidian Bishops assembled; Tigesius had deposed Cæcilianus, and elected Majorinus in his stead) was declared to be invalid, since Cæcilianus had been condemned in his absence, not having been able to attend through fear of violence. In the third session Cæcilianus was declared to be innocent, and his consecration was approved. Donatus was proved to be the author of all the mischief. The Bishops who had condemned Cæcilianus, and those who had come to Rome to accuse him, were, nevertheless, not separated from the Roman communion, since nothing had been established against them. The Council further ruled, that those Bishops who had been consecrated by Majorinus, should be permitted to retain their sees; and, moreover, that in places where there were two Bishops, one consecrated by Majorinus and the other by Cæcilianus, the Bishop of longest standing should retain the see, and the other be appointed to some other bishopric. "This," as Fleury observes, "is a singular instance of the exercise of a dispensing power, moderating the rigour of the law for the sake of peace."§ This sentence was decisive; and the Donatists have from that time been always considered as schismatics.

* Burton, Lect. on Eccles. Hist., lect. xxx.

† Augustin., Opera, tom. ii., fol. 1679, epist. lxxxviii., 1, p. 213; epist. xciii., 13, p. 235; epist. cxxx., 4, p. 381. Brevic. Collat. diei iii., cap. 7, 12.

‡ Bower, History of the Popes, vol. i., p. 87, *et seq.* 4to. London, 1750.

§ Labbe, Concilia, tom. i., p. 1401, fol. 1671. See also, "A Manual of Councils of the Holy Catholic Church, comprising the substance of the most remarkable and important Canons, alphabetically arranged. By the Rev. Edward H. Landon, M.A." 8vo. p. 518. London, 1846.

Cæcilianus did not immediately return to Carthage, but remained some time at Brescia. In the meanwhile two Bishops were sent to Carthage by the Council, who, after carefully weighing the evidence upon the spot, decided in favour of Cæcilianus, and held communion with the Clergy of his party. The Bishop then returned to his city, where he found Donatus had already arrived before him; and although a definitive sentence had been passed, the schism was carried on as openly as before. A still further trial was furnished to Cæcilianus, when Constantine wrote to the Proconsul, and ordered him to examine the charges which had been brought against Felix,* Bishop of Aptungis. This was the only shadow which remained of any grounds for questioning the ordination of Cæcilianus; and, after an impartial examination, it was proved, that Felix had never delivered up the books of the church, and that there was no impediment to his administering ordination. There is reason to think that many of the Clergy, after this sentence, were reconciled with Cæcilianus, though others continued their opposition, and appealed again to Constantine. This led to a still more numerous Council being assembled in the following year.

Peace did not come upon Israel as was expected. Licinius, instigated by a jealousy of the most fatal character, was driven to a procedure which ultimately terminated in civil war, and in the loss of his own life. Notwithstanding the proofs which he had had of the divine interposition in favour of the Gospel, during his contest with Maximinus, the force of old prejudices imbibed under Galerius operated at length, in conjunction with the natural depravity of the human heart, to induce him to renew the persecution. He passed a law which enjoined that men should not appear in company with women in the houses of prayer, and forbade women to attend the sacred schools of virtue, or to receive instruction from the Bishops.† He prohibited Christian Synods in his dominions, expelled believers from his court, and ordered the women to furnish themselves with separate teachers for their own sex. He dismissed from his army those who refused to sacrifice, and forbade any supplies to be afforded them in their necessities. He proceeded still further. He murdered Bishops and destroyed churches. At Amasia, in Pontus, his cruelty was particularly distinguished. He used enchantments; and thus the powers of darkness made a feeble attempt to recover by his means the ground that was lost.‡ Foxe declares, that "the flattering officers that were under him, thinking by this means to please him, slew, and made [put] out of the way, many Bishops, and without any cause put them to death, as though they had been homicides, and heinous offenders; and such rigorousness used they towards some of them,

* Optat. de Schism. Donat., lib. i., cap. 27. See also Gesta Purgationis Felicis, apud Routh. Reliq. Sacræ, vol. iv., p. 287, 8vo., Oxonii, 1846.

† "These regulations being received with general ridicule, he devised other means for effecting the ruin of the churches. He ordered that the usual congregation of the people should be held in the open country, outside the gates; alleging that the open air without the city was far more suitable for a multitude than the houses of prayer within the walls." (Euseb., De Vita Constant., lib. i., cap. 53.)

‡ Milner, History of the Church, vol. i., p. 509.

that they cut their bodies into *gobbets** and small pieces, in the manner of a butcher, and after that threw them into the sea to feed fishes.† What shall we speak of the exiles and confiscations of good and virtuous men? for he took by violence every man's substance, and cared not by what means he came by it; but threatened them with death, unless they would forego the same. He banished those who had committed no evil at all. He commanded that both gentlemen and men of honour should be made [put] out of the way; neither yet herewith content, he gave their daughters that were unmarried to varlets and wicked ones. Licinius himself, though on account of age he was impotent, shamefully attempted to vitiate many women, men's wives, and maids. Which cruel outrages of his caused many godly men of their own accord to forsake their houses; and it was also seen, that the woods, fields, desert places and mountains, were fain to be the habitations and resting-places of the poor and miserable Christians."‡ Among those who suffered during this transitory outbreak, was one Theodore, who was first hanged upon the cross, was tormented with bodkins thrust into his person, and ultimately beheaded; also an individual of the same name who was martyred at Amasæa, and another was crucified at Perga; Basileus, the Bishop of Amasæa, Nicholas, the Prelate of Myra, and Gregory of Armenia, and afterwards Paul of Neocæsarea, who, by the commandment of Licinius, had both his hands disabled by a searing iron. In a word, Licinius appeared resolved to extend as far as possible this persecution throughout Christendom; which would have been the case, had not the providence of God appeared in behalf of his suffering church.

Licinius could not proceed far in this line of conduct without coming into collision with Constantine.§ Enough already had been achieved by the former to cause not only shyness but positive distrust, inasmuch as the edict of Milan had been so flagrantly violated; but the perfidy of Licinius justifies the most unfavourable suspicions; and by the faint light which history reflects on the transaction, we may discover a foul conspiracy which was fomented and encouraged by the machinations of Licinius against the authority of his colleague. Constantine had lately given his sister Anastasia in marriage to Bassianus, a man of considerable family and fortune, and had elevated his new kinsman to the rank of Cæsar, and Africa was designed for his department in the empire. But the performance of the promised

* *Gobbet*, a small piece; as much as may be swallowed at a mouthful.

† Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. x., cap. 8.

‡ Foxe, Acts and Monuments, vol. i., p. 255, 8vo. edit.

§ After several unsuccessful battles, he was obliged to throw himself upon the mercy of the victor, who, nevertheless, ordered him to be strangled, in the year 325. After his last victory over Licinius, Constantine reigned sole Emperor till his death; and by policy, enactments, regulations, and munificence, endeavoured as much as possible to obliterate gradually the ancient superstitions, and to establish Christian worship throughout the Roman empire. He had undoubtedly learned from the wars and the machinations of Licinius, that neither himself, nor the Roman empire, could remain secure while the ancient superstition continued prevalent; and, therefore, from this time onward, he openly opposed the pagan deities and their worship, as prejudicial to the interests of the state. (Mosheim, Instit. Eccles. Hist., edited by Soames.)

favour was either attended with so much delay, or accompanied with so many unequal conditions, that the fidelity of Bassianus was alienated rather than secured by the honourable distinction which he had obtained. His nomination had been ratified by the consent of Licinius; and that artful Prince, by the means of his emissaries, soon contrived to enter into a secret and dangerous correspondence with the new Cæsar, to irritate his discontent, and to urge him to the rash enterprise of extorting by violence what he might in vain solicit from the justice of Constantine. But the vigilant Emperor discovered the conspiracy before it was ripe for execution; and, after solemnly renouncing the alliance of Bassianus, despoiled him of the purple, and inflicted upon him due punishment for his treason and ingratitude. The haughty refusal of Licinius, when he was required to deliver up the criminals who had taken refuge in his dominions, confirmed the suspicions already entertained of his perfidy; and the indignities offered on the frontiers of Italy to the statues of Constantine became the signal of discord between the two Princes.* The first battle was fought near Cibalis, and the contest, which had lasted from the dawn of day to a late hour in the evening, was decided by a vigorous and effective charge made by Constantine, which brought the victory to the standard of the Emperor. The plain of Mardia, in Thrace, was the theatre of a second battle, no less obstinate and bloody than the former; and the victory was once more decided by the superior abilities and prowess of Constantine. The loss of these two battles, and of his bravest veterans, reduced the fierce spirit of Licinius to sue for peace. The ambassador Mistrianus was admitted to the audience of Constantine; and the result of the whole was, that the tranquillity of the Roman world was restored, and the temporary reconciliation of Constantine and Licinius effected, embittered as it confessedly was by resentment and jealousy, by the remembrance of recent injuries, and by the apprehension of future dangers: they maintained, however, above eight years the tranquillity of the Roman world; nevertheless, at the termination of that period a civil war between Constantine and Licinius again commenced, and after a series of important engagements, the vigilance of the conqueror achieved great success. The decisive engagement was fought on the

* Licinius being vanquished in 314, he was quiet for about nine years. But in the year 324, this restless man again attacked Constantine, being urged on both by his own inclination and by the instigation of the pagan Priests. That he might secure to himself a victory, he attached the Pagans to his cause, by severely oppressing the Christians, and cruelly putting not a few of their Bishops to death. Even Julian, than whom no one was more prejudiced against Constantine, could not but pronounce Licinius an infamous tyrant, who was sunk in vices and crimes. See Julian's *Cæsares*, p. 222, ed. Spanheim. I would here observe, what appears to have been overlooked hitherto, that Aurelius Victor mentions this persecution by Licinius in his book, *De Cæsaribus*, cap. xli., p. 435, ed. Arntzenii; where he says, "Licinio ne insontium quidem ac nobilium philosophorum servili more cruciatus adhibiti modum fecere." The *philosophers* whom Licinius is here said to have tortured, were, doubtless, *Christians;* whom many, from their slight acquaintance with our religion, have mistaken for a sect of philosophers. The commentators on Aurelius have left this passage untouched; which is apt to be the case with those who are intent only on the enlargement of grammatical knowledge derived from ancient writers. (Mosheim, Institutes of Eccles. Hist., edited by Soames.)

heights of Chrysopolis, or, as it is now called, Scutari.* The troops of Licinius, though they were lately raised, ill-armed, and worse disciplined, made head against their conquerors with fruitless, but desperate, valour, till a total defeat, and a slaughter of five-and-twenty thousand men, irretrievably determined the fate of their leader. He retired to Nicomedia, rather with the view of gaining some time for negotiation, than with the hope of any effectual defence. Constantia, his wife, and the sister of Constantine, interceded with her brother in favour of her husband, and obtained, from his policy rather than from his compassion, a solemn promise, confirmed by an oath, that after the sacrifice of Martinianus, and the resignation of the purple, Licinius himself should be permitted to pass the remainder of his life in peace and affluence. The behaviour of Constantia, and her relation to the contending parties, naturally recalls the remembrance of that matron who was the sister of Augustus, and the wife of Antony. But the temper of mankind was altered, and it was no longer esteemed infamous for a Roman to survive his honour and independence. Licinius solicited and accepted the pardon of his offences, laid himself and his purple at the feet of his *lord* and *master*, was raised from the ground with insulting pity, was admitted the same day to the imperial banquet, and soon afterwards was sent away to Thessalonica, which had been chosen for the place of his confinement, which was soon terminated by death; and it is doubtful whether a tumult of the soldiers, or a decree of the Senate, was suggested as the motive for his execution. According to the rules of tyranny, he was accused of forming a conspiracy, and of holding a treasonable correspondence with the barbarians.† The memory of Licinius was branded with infamy, his statues were thrown down, and by a hasty edict, of such mischievous tendency that it was almost immediately corrected, all his laws, and all the judicial proceedings of his reign, were at once abolished. By this victory of Constantine,

* Licinius put the truth or falsehood of the Gospel on the event of war. It was an unwarranted appeal; but God answered him in his own way. He lost in the issue both his empire and his life. It is remarkable, that one of Constantine's soldiers, who parted with the banner of the cross to save his life, lost it, while he who, in his room, supported and upheld the banner was preserved. (Milner, History of the Church, cent. iv., cap. 2; Euseb., De Vita Constant., lib. ii., cap. 9.)

† "Contra religionem sacramenti Thessalonicæ privatus occisus est." (Eutropii Roman. Hist., lib. ii., cap. 6; and his evidence is confirmed by Jerome, as well as by Zosimus, lib. ii., p. 102.) The Valesian writer is the only one who mentions the soldiers, and it is Zonaras alone who calls in the assistance of the Senate. Eusebius gives this transaction the *go-by*; but Sozomen, a century afterwards, ventures to assert the treasonable practices of Licinius. "He was deeply incensed against the Christians on account of his disagreement with Constantine, and thought to wound him by their sufferings; and besides, he suspected that they earnestly desired that Constantine alone should enjoy the sovereign rule." In addition to all this, we may mention that, when on the eve of another war with Constantine, Licinius, in order to prepare his mind for the event of the contest, had recourse to sacrifices and oracles; and that, deceived by promises of power, he returned to the religion of the Greeks. The Greeks themselves, too, relate that about this period he consulted the oracle of Apollo Didymus, at Miletus, concerning the result of the war, and received an answer from the dæmon, couched in the following words of Homer:—

"O old man, much do the youths distress thee, warring with thee!
Thy strength has become enfeebled, but thy old age shall be hard."

(Sozomen, Eccles. Hist., lib. i., cap. 7.)

the Roman world was again united under the authority of one Emperor, thirty-seven years after Diocletian had divided his power and provinces with his associate Herculeus.*

With the death of Maximinus expired, confessedly, the last hope of Paganism to maintain itself by the authority of the Government. Though Licinius was only accidentally connected with the Christian party, and afterwards allied himself for a short time to the pagan interest, at this juncture his enemies were those of Christianity, and his cruel triumph annihilated at once the adherents of Maximinus and those of the old religion. The new hierarchy fell at once: the chief Magistrates of almost all the cities were executed; for even where they were not invested in the pontifical offices, it was under their authority that Paganism had renewed its more imposing form, and it sank with them into the common ruin. The arts by which Theotecnus of Antioch, the chief adviser of Maximinus, had imposed upon the populace of that city by mysterious wonders, were detected, and exposed to public contempt, and the author put to death. Tyre, which recommended itself to Maximinus by the most violent hostility to the Christian name, was constrained to witness the re-construction of the fallen church in far more than its original grandeur. Eusebius, afterwards the Bishop of Cæsarea, and the historian of the church, pronounced an inaugural discourse on its re-consecration. His description of the building is curious in itself, as the model of an Eastern church, and illustrates the power and opulence of the Christian party in a city which had taken the lead on the side of Paganism. Nor would the Christian orator venture greatly to exaggerate the splendour of a building which stood in the midst of, and provoked, as it were, a comparison with, temples of high antiquity and unquestioned magnificence.†

. The Christian church was built on the old site; for, though a more convenient and imposing space might have been found, the piety of the Christians clung with reverence to a spot consecrated by the most holy associations; and their pride, perhaps, was gratified in restoring to more than its former grandeur the edifice which had been destroyed by pagan malice. The whole site was environed with a wall; a lofty *propylæon*, which faced the rising sun, commanded the attention of the passing Pagan, who could not but contrast the present splendour with the recent solitude of the place; and afforded an imposing glimpse of the magnificence within. The intermediate space between the *propylæon* and the church was laid out in a cloister, with four colonnades, enclosed with a palisade of wood. The centre square was open to the sun and air; and two fountains sparkled in the midst, and reminded the worshipper, by their emblematic purity, of the necessity of sanctification. The uninitiate proceeded no further than the cloister, but might behold at this modest distance the mysteries of the sanctuary. Several other vestibules, or *propylæa*, intervened between the cloister and the main building. The three gates of the church fronted the east; of which

* Gibbon, Decline and Fall, &c., vol. ii., p. 258. Milman edit. 8vo.
† Milman, History of Christianity, vol. ii., p. 298.

the central was the loftiest, and most costly, "like a Queen between her attendants." It was adorned with plates of brass, and richly-sculptured reliefs. Two colonnades, or aisles, ran along the main building, above which were windows, which lighted the edifice; other structures, for the use of the Ministers, adjoined. Unfortunately the pompous eloquence of Eusebius would not condescend to the vulgar details of measurements, and dwells only in vague terms of wonder at the spaciousness, the heaven-soaring loftiness, the splendour of the interior. The roof was of beams from the cedars of Lebanon, the floor inlaid with marble. In the centre rose the altar, which had already obtained the name of the place of sacrifice: it was guarded from the approach of the profane by a trellis of the most slender and graceful workmanship. Lofty seats were prepared for the higher orders, and benches for those of lower rank were arranged with regularity throughout the building. Tyre, no doubt, did not stand alone in this splendid restoration of her Christian worship; and Christianity, even before its final triumph under Constantine, before the restoration of their endowments, and the munificent imperial gifts, possessed sufficient wealth at least to commence these costly undertakings.*

The account which we have just recorded of the consecration of the church of Tyre, cannot fail to lead us to tremble for the welfare of the church in that city. Milner, the historian, very properly remarks, "that neither in Constantine, nor in his favourite Bishops, nor in the general appearance of the church, can we see much of the spirit of godliness." Pompous apparatus, augmented superstitions, and unmeaning forms of piety, much show and little substance, appear. This is the impression which the account given by Eusebius leaves on the mind. If we look at the external appearance of Christianity, nothing can be more splendid. An Emperor, full of zeal for the propagation of the only divine religion, by edicts restores to the church everything of which it had been deprived, indemnifies those who had suffered, honours the Pastors exceedingly, recommends to Governors of provinces to promote the Gospel;† and though he will neither oblige them, nor any others, to profess it, yet he forbids them to make use of the sacrifices commonly made by Prefects; he erects churches exceedingly sumptuous and ornamental, with distinctions of the parts, corresponding, in some measure, to those in Solomon's temple; discovers with much zeal the sepulchre of Christ at Jerusalem, real or pretended, and honours it with a most expensive sacred edifice. His mother Helena fills the whole Roman world with her munificent acts in support of religion; and, after erecting churches, and travelling from place to place to evidence her zeal, dies before her son, aged eighty years. Nor is the Christian cause neglected even out of the bounds of the Roman empire. Constantine‡ zealously pleads, in a letter to Sapor, King of Persia, for the Christians of his dominions; he destroys idol-temples, prohibits impious

* Milman, Hist. of Christianity, vol. ii., p. 300.
† Euseb., De Vita Constant., lib. ii., cap. 20, 21, 44, 45, 56; lib. iii., cap. 25.
‡ Ibid., lib. iv., cap. 9.

pagan rites, puts an end to the savage fights of gladiators, stands up with respectful silence to hear the sermon of Eusebius, Bishop of Cæsarea, the historian;* furnishes him with the volumes of the Scriptures for the use of the churches, orders the observance of the festivals of the martyrs, has prayer and reading of the Scripture at his court, dedicates churches with great solemnity, makes Christian orations himself, one of which of a considerable length is preserved by the historian, his favourite Bishop; directs the sacred observation of the Lord's day, to which he adds that of Friday also, the day of Christ's crucifixion; and teaches the soldiers of his army to pray by a short form made for their use.†

It may seem invidious to throw any shade on this picture; but though the abolition of lewd, impious, and inhuman customs must have been of great advantage to society, and though the benefits of Christianity, compared with Paganism, to the world, appear very strong by these means; yet all this, if sound principles be wanting, is but form and shadow. As it was difficult to clear Origen of depreciating the divinity of Christ, so it is still more difficult to exculpate Eusebius, with whom he was a favourite author. Not to anticipate what will more properly pass under examination hereafter, there seems to have been, both in Eusebius and some of his friends, and probably in the Emperor himself, a disposition, of which they perhaps were not conscious, to lessen the honours of the Son of God. In his oration at the dedication of the church at Tyre, he distinguishes between the first and the second cause, and seems very careful to give the supreme title exclusively to the Father. His sermons breathe little of Christianity. He largely assigns various causes for the coming of Christ into the world; and though among these he gives some place to the work of redemption and sacrifice for sin, he speaks of them slightly, and as it were by the by. Milner observes in one place of his writings, that he speaks in a very subordinate manner of the Holy Ghost, though it must be confessed, he is so rhetorical and indistinct in his theological discourses, that it is difficult to extract any determinate propositions from his writings. It was to be expected, that great defectiveness of doctrine would not fail to influence practice. External piety flourished, monastic societies, in particular places, were also growing; but faith, love, heavenly-mindedness, appear very rare: yet, among the poor and obscure Christians, we hope, there was far more godliness than could be seen at courts, and among Bishops and persons of eminence. The doctrine of real conversion was very much lost, or external baptism was placed in its stead; and the true doctrine of justification by faith, and the practical flight to a crucified Saviour for troubled consciences, were scarcely to be seen. There was much outward religion; but this could not make men saints in heart and life. The worst part of the character of Constantine is, that as he grew older, he became more culpable, oppressive in his own family, oppressive to the government, oppressive by Eastern superfluous magnificence; and the facts dis-

* Euseb., De Vita Constant., lib. iv., cap. 25, 33, 36. † Ibid., cap. 18—20.

played in his history will show how little true humility and charity were known in the Christian world, while superstition and self-righteousness were making vigorous shoots, and the real Gospel of Christ was hidden from men who professed it.*

The longest and severest persecution which the Christians had ever sustained, was now happily concluded. It had lasted ten years in the East, with a few occasional interruptions, while it had scarcely been felt in Europe beyond the first two years. The difference seems to be attributable to nothing but the will of the Emperors. We are not to assume that the Christians were more numerous in the West, or that they were more generally unpopular in the East. In Italy and Africa, while they were governed by Constantius and Constantine, the persecution was scarcely felt; but it raged almost incessantly in Asia and Egypt, which were subject to Galerius and Maximinus; and these persecutors, where are they? How great the working of the divine power! We have seen many Emperors who conspired at one time against the Lord and his anointed, having the world under their subjection. If the power of man could have extirpated the name of Christ, what could they do more than what they did accomplish? If any policy or device could have answered their purpose, what was wanting? If torments or pains of death could have assisted, what cruelty could be invented which was not actually put into execution? Nevertheless, these persecutors were swept from the earth by the besom of destruction, and the church of Christ still exists founded upon the rock. "To his everlasting mercy," says Lactantius, "ought we to render thanks, that, having at length looked upon the earth, he deigned to collect again and to restore his flock, partly laid waste by ravening wolves, and partly scattered abroad; and to extirpate those noxious wild beasts who had trodden down its pastures, and destroyed its resting-places. Where now are the surnames of *Jovii* and *Herculei*, once so glorious and renowned amongst the nations, surnames insolently assumed at first by Diocletian and Herculeus, and afterwards transferred to their successors? The Lord has blotted them out, and erased them from the earth. Let us, therefore, with exultation, celebrate the triumphs of God, and oftentimes with praises make mention of his victory; let us in our prayers, by night and by day, beseech him to confirm for ever that peace, which, after a warfare of ten years, he has bestowed on his own; let us implore the Lord, that it would please him propitiously and mercifully to continue his pity towards his servants, to protect them from the machinations and assaults of the devil, and to guard the churches in perpetual felicity."†

Mischief of a different kind arose out of the long interval of peace which followed the Decian persecution. We have mentioned the remark of Eusebius, that the Clergy and their flocks had become exceedingly corrupt. This may account for so many persons lapsing in the time of trial. Others, perhaps, had been instructed very imperfectly in the doctrines of the Gospel; and though they no longer

* Milner, History of the Church, cent. iv., chap. 2, vol. i., p. 512.
† Lactant., De Mort. Persecut., cap. lii.

worshipped idols, they were Christians in little else than in name. The fiery trial of ten years would naturally purify the church from these corrupt or useless members; and if we were to fix upon any time since the days of the Apostles, when the lives of Christians were likely to win the hearts of the Heathen, it would probably be the time when the death of Maximinus placed the whole empire at the disposal of Constantine. The good intention of the Emperor toward the Christian faith, was undoubtedly a most favourable circumstance; but it was the consequence, as well as the cause, of the wide extension of the Gospel. The example set by the court would, of course, be generally followed, and especially by the higher orders; but Constantine found his subjects almost prepared for the change which was now made; and the establishment of Christianity, as the national religion, could not have been long delayed.*

* Burton, Lect. on Eccles. Hist., lect. xxx.

BOOK V.

PERSECUTIONS WHICH TOOK PLACE FROM THE ACCESSION OF CONSTANTINE THE GREAT, TO THE DEATH OF JOHN WYCLIFFE, THE MORNING-STAR OF THE REFORMATION.

CHAPTER I.

The general Aspect of Society—Insidious Introduction of Error and Corruption in the Church—Constantine assumes the Title of Pontifex Maximus—Severe Enactments against the Jews—Death by Fire—Retributive Providence exercised on the Jewish People—Effects of a Departure from Christian Simplicity—Evils resulting from worldly Associations—Arius, anterior to the Nicæan Council—Progress of the Arian Heresy—Christian Churches in Rome—Persecution of the Donatists—The Eastern Part of the World still Pagan—The Christian Hierarchy and the Pagan Priesthood contrasted—Martyrdom of Blaise, Bishop of Sebaste—Circumcelliones—Their Extravagancies—Strong Passion for Martyrdom—Constantine strives zealously to promote Peace—Fatality of false Peace—On the Administration of the Christian Community—Effect of the imperial Authority—Its deleterious Tendency—Objects contemplated in the early Synods of the Church—Alleged Cause for assembling the First General Council—Œcumenical Councils—Assembly of the Council of Nice—By whom it was composed—Where it was convened—Is opened by Constantine—Splendour of his Appearance—Vain Attempts of certain Gentile Philosophers—Their Conversion—The Nicene Creed—The Homoousian Faith—Remarks on Newman's History of the Arians—Arius is deposed and banished—Constantia is inclined to Arianism—The vacillating Temper of the Emperor—Reports affecting his moral Character—Arius is restored—Eusebius Bishop of Nicomedia—Arian Bishops recalled from Exile—Who become Oppressors—Eustathius—His Character foully calumniated—Considerable national Commotion—Athanasius—His Rise—The Emperor commands the Reception of Arius in the Church—It is disregarded—State of the Church—Heavy Crimes attributed by the Arians to Athanasius—Arsenius—Synod summoned to investigate Complaints against Athanasius—Base Conduct of the Arians—Anecdote recorded by Theodoret—Further Persecution of Athanasius by the Arians—Proceedings at Tyre—Banishment of Athanasius—Interview with the Emperor—Numerous Acts of Oppression and Persecution by the Arians—Dissimulation of Arius, and Weakness of Constantine, who insists on Arius being admitted into the Church—Pious and exemplary Conduct of Alexander—Awful Death of Arius—Remarks on his Character—Position of the Church at this Period—Ecclesiastical Canons made Law of the Empire—Heresy considered a criminal Act—The Power of the Emperors yields to the Church—All Parties indulge in gross Acts of Intolerance—The Council of Gangra—Its Character—Apostolical Constitutions—Their intrinsic Value—Foundation of Constantinople—Erection of this City favourable to Christianity—Ceremonial of the Foundation—Dimensions of the City—William of Malmsbury quoted—Basilicas—Conduct of Constantine—Maimbourg quoted—Socrates—Sozomen—Theodoret—Philostorgius—Epiphanius—Hilary—Ruffinus—Sulpicius Severus—Constantine puts Crispus, his Son, to Death—His professed Repentance for this rash Act—Tragic End of Fausta—The Illness, Death, and Funeral of Constantine

—His Character—How far was he a Christian—His Baptism, why delayed—Sanguinary Massacre of the Princes—Prospects of the Church—Paganism how far suppressed—Persia, its Condition—Tiridates—His Death—Agitated State of Affairs in Armenia—Severe Persecutions inflicted on the Christians—Constantius makes War against Persia—Battle of Singara—And the Siege of Nisibis.

THE Christian history of the fourth and following centuries presents us with some of the most striking characters in the martyrology of the church. Stupendous changes took place in the aspect of society, and the movements of the human mind were advancing as with railway speed; so much so, that ecclesiastical historians are not agreed what term they will affix to the earlier part of that period. It has been denominated "the Nicene age," "the age of Councils and Synods," "the golden age of Christian learning," and "the dogmatic age." The last two are perhaps the best definitions which can be used; for it is not easy to point out any other portion of the revolution of time that has produced so many theological writers of first-rate eminence, whose works have had such a powerful influence in regulating modes of faith and worship, and in giving expression to the feelings of devotion. Highest among those who were living in the concluding part of the fourth century were Athanasius of Alexandria, Basil of Cæsarea, Gregory Nazianzen, Hilary of Poitiers, Cyril of Jerusalem, Ambrose of Milan, Augustine of Hippo, Paulinus of Nola, and Jerome the celebrated reviser of the Vulgate, and translator of the Bible. What an array of highly-gifted men, honoured in their generation, and whose hope was full of immortality! Their printed works occupy no less than thirty-eight folio volumes; and to the authority of one or other of these an appeal is made on almost every point of practical, doctrinal, and polemical divinity which has since divided the opinions of the Christian world. But an age of excitement and controversy, like a stream which, turning from its true course, traces its direction through unhealthy grounds, cannot roll on, without carrying down in its channel much of that which is turbulent and impure. The fourth century was a period of transition,* between the ascendancy of Heathenism and that of Christianity, in the Roman empire: and in the struggle for influence, a lamentable compromise between right and wrong was often made on the part of proselyting Christians. Recruits, rather than converts, were obtained for the ranks of the cross; and the frailties, the passions, and the imaginations of men began, at the expense of conscience and truth, to be enlisted in the service of the church. Objects of worship were disguised and presented under every form more consonant with Heathenism than with Gospel ideas of religion; rites similar to those of ancient mythology were introduced, and a breach was opened to every corruption.

* Those who contend most strenuously for antiquity, admit that a change took place in the fourth century from the Christianity of the Apostles to that of the Fathers. (See Brit. Magazine, vol. ix., p. 359, Rivington, 1836.) "Three centuries and more were necessary for the infant church to attain her mature and perfect form and due stature. Athanasius, Basil, and Ambrose are the fully-instructed Doctors of her doctrine, morals, and discipline." According to this hypothesis, Paul and Peter and John were infants compared with Ambrose; and we are to receive a new doctrine from the fourth century. (Gilly.)

It was at the same time a turning-point between scriptural and traditional Christianity; and as much learning and argument were employed to justify the admixture of mythological ceremonies with evangelical exercises of devotion, as to prove the cardinal verities of the Gospel. In fact, the close of the fourth century is the epoch from which we date the time when, to use the words of Bishop Van Mildert, a "system of Paganism was engrafted on Christianity;" when the simplicity of the Gospel was sacrificed, in a fearful degree, to pious sophistries; and when the forms of the Pantheon were fatally introduced into the Christian sanctuary.* And here it must be confessed that the undue deference, which has been shown in every age, for "the learned," to the neglect of humble and common-sense piety, receives a severe rebuke in the destiny of those churches which were most rich in polemical theologians. How few of the capitals of Asia and Africa, where ecclesiastical learning flourished so proudly in the fourth century, can now exhibit any vestiges of the Christian establishments which were the glory of the dogmatic age! "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength." This prophetic saying, to which our Lord referred on two remarkable occasions, had an extraordinary fulfilment at the period we are now discussing. The chief among "the wise and prudent" of that day were falling into errors, which had gradually crept into the church; and the religion, which was at first commended to the world by the simplicity and unbending holiness of its professors, was now promoted by sophistry and false reasoning. Ambrose, who was then at the height of his reputation in the Western church, and Jerome, who was consulted as an oracle both in that and the Eastern, and even Augustine himself, gave their sanction to practices and opinions, at which "the stones would have cried out," had all who professed to be guided by the holy Scriptures held their peace.†

Constantine, having assumed the office of Pontifex Maximus, probably imagined that, as a pagan ruler, he was supreme over the privileges of the heathen temples; and, as a Christian Prince, he might transfer them to the Ministers of his adopted religion. As Emperor he continued until now to observe all the pagan usages, in spite of his professed attachment to Christianity. The shield of imperial protection, which the Emperor had thrown around the Christian church, occasioned great anger among the Jews, who were still numerous and powerful in the empire. It is not improbable that many of their number took opportunity at this time—that is, soon after the edict of Milan—to forsake Judaism and embrace the religion of the Emperor. It was their custom when any persons quitted their religion to stone them, or to cast them into the fire. "I have no doubt, though I cannot produce demonstrative evidence of the fact, that many of the Jews were guilty of such conduct about this period." ‡

* These men, by taking the Greek philosophers to their assistance, in explaining the nature and genius of the Gospel, had unhappily turned religion into an art; and their successors, the Schoolmen, by framing a body of theology out of them, instead of searching for it from the Scriptures, soon after turned it into a trade. (Warburton.)

† Vigilantius and his Times. By W. S. Gilly, D.D. London, 1844.

‡ Townsend, Civil and Ecclesiastical History, &c., vol. i., p. 249.

It is otherwise impossible to acquit Constantine of the charge of cruelty and persecution. Retaliation, under these circumstances, would have been considered justifiable. An original law consigning Jews to the flames for attacking their brethren with stones because they forsook Judaism, and that, too, with all their aiders and abettors, would have been intolerable. Such a law was passed in the year 315.* It is so worded as to imply that the Jews had committed great outrages upon those that forsook Judaism, of which stoning the proselyte was one. It describes the other outrages in general terms only. As the committing the convert to Christianity to the flames was a usual custom with them, and as this horrible enactment is the punishment now assigned to them,† we are willing to believe that the law of Constantine, which decreed *vivi-comburation* as the penalty to the Jews for any insult upon the proselytes from Judaism to Christianity, was decreed in the spirit of retaliation, and not of arbitrary persecution. Hadrian was accustomed to cut off the ears of the Jews; and Chrysostom affirms that they assembled about this time to rebuild Jerusalem; and that Constantine, offended at their rashness, cut off their ears, and sold them as slaves. There is no contemporary evidence, however, to justify us in believing this assertion of Chrysostom; neither is there any law in the Theodosian Code which ordains the cutting off of the ears of the Jews. Eutychius declares that Constantine ordered them all to be baptized, and to eat pork at Easter. Of these allegations, also, we find no evidence. There is no law to that effect. Very unfortunate has it been for the cause of toleration and humanity, that the Jews gave any occasion for the law which sentenced them to a retaliatory punishment. The penalty continued to be enforced against them for many generations when no outrages were committed. This was the first law of a professedly Christian Prince which may be called persecuting. The first part of it, if it be indeed recriminatory, might be defensible; for the political laws of a

* We subjoin the whole law. It is not so long as the preamble to a modern Act of Parliament. "Judæis, et majoribus eorum, et patriarchis, volumus intimari, quod, si qui, post hanc legem, aliquem, qui eorum feralem fugerit sectam, et ad Dei cultum respexerit, saxis *aut alio genere* (quod nunc fieri cognoscimus) ausus fuerit attemperare, mox flammis dedendus, et cum omnibus suis participibus concremandus. Si quis vero ex populo ad eorum nefariam sectam accesserit, et conciliabulis eorum se applicaverit, cum ipsis pœnas meritas sustinebit." (Dat. xv. Kalend. Nov., Murgillo, Constantino, A. iv. et Licinio iv., Coss.)

† This punishment Moses commanded to be inflicted on the daughters of Priests who should be guilty of fornication, (Lev. xxi. 9,) and upon a man who should marry both the mother and the daughter. (Lev. xx. 14.) This custom seems to have been in use in the East from a very early period. When Judah was informed that his daughter-in-law Tamar was pregnant, he condemned her to be burnt. (Gen. xxxviii. 24.) Many ages afterwards we find the Babylonians or Chaldeans burning certain offenders alive; (Jer. xxix. 22; Dan. iii. 6;) and this mode of punishment was not uncommon in the East so late as the seventeenth century. Chardin, in his Travels, (vol. vi. p. 118, of Langlé's edition,) after speaking of the most common mode of punishing with death, says, "But there is still a particular way of putting to death such as have transgressed in civil affairs; either by causing a dearth, or by selling above the tax by a false weight, or who have committed themselves in any other manner. The cooks are put upon a spit, and roasted over a slow fire; (see Jerem. xxix. 22;) bakers are thrown into a hot oven. During the dearth, in 1688, I saw such ovens heated on the royal square in Ispahan to terrify the bakers, and deter them from deriving advantage from the general distress." (Burder, Oriental Literature.)

state might be sometimes justified, when they are framed upon the principles of retaliation, which, in private life, Christianity would condemn. For the second part, which commanded the punishment of death by fire to be inflicted upon those who became converted to Judaism, it is difficult to form an apology. It is painful, though it is curious, to trace in this manner the origin of the laws which were afterwards framed into a code of persecution. It is evident, in spite of the edict of Milan, that Constantine did not understand toleration.*

The doctrine of a retributive Providence may be illustrated in a very powerful but, alas! awful manner; and in no degree more forcible and impressive than towards the Jews. They were the first and most inveterate enemies the Christians had. They put them to death as often as they had it in their power. At the martyrdom of Polycarp the Jews constituted the most active portion of the populace, who collected the fuel from the public baths, and ignited the pile that was to consume to ashes the Prelate of Smyrna. When they revolted against the Romans, in the time of the Emperor Hadrian, Barchochebas, who was at the head of that revolt, employed against the Christians the most rigorous punishments to compel them to blaspheme and to renounce Jesus Christ. And we find that even in the third century they endeavoured to obtain possession of Christian women, in order to scourge and stone them in their synagogues. They cursed the Christians three times a day in their sanctuaries; their Rabbins would not allow them to converse with the faithful upon any occasion; nor were they satisfied with manifesting hatred and detestation, they despatched emissaries all over the world to defame the Christian character, and to disseminate calumnies against them. They accused them, amongst other things, of worshipping the sun, and the head of an ass; they reproached them with idleness, and with being a useless race of people. They charged them with treason, and endeavouring to erect a new monarchy against the Romans. They affirmed that, in celebrating their mysteries, they were accustomed to kill a child, and eat his flesh. They accused them of the most shocking incests, and of intemperance in their feasts of charity. Nevertheless, the lives and behaviour of the first Christians were sufficient to refute all that was said against them, and evidently demonstrated that these accusations were mere calumny, and the effect of inveterate, nay, diabolical, malice.

A departure, says Mr. Stebbing, from the simplicity of revelation, a desire to set forth and embody mysteries in human language, which the Holy Spirit himself did not see fit to define, and a combining of spiritual offices with temporal rewards and dignities, may be regarded as among the causes of all the divisions by which the Christian world has been agitated, and the promulgation of Christianity retarded in many of its most important particulars.† It was indeed

* Townsend, Civil and Ecclesiastical History, vol. i., p. 250.

† How corrupt is human nature! The church has outward peace and even prosperity; yet feuds, contentions, and the most unworthy spirit of avarice and ambition appear very prevalent. So ungrateful were men for that admirable administration

with the establishment of our religion, as it is with other benefits conferred by the Almighty, his providence had no sooner given the blessing, and men had but just begun to enjoy the advantages of religious liberty, when they formed ideas utterly subversive of that peace, and those elevating virtues, which were to be looked for as the immediate fruit of a divine and newly-established faith, of a religion, the sublime wonders attending the publication of which were still solemnly impressed on the memory; of one whose triumphs had been obtained by the exercise of so much human virtue, and so many striking evidences of divine interference; of one which, sent from heaven, had not yet been long enough received among men to become greatly marred by error, or lose the beauty or the odour of its birth-place. It might have been expected that, for some generations at least after its victory over Paganism, Christianity would have been allowed to shed its bland influence through the world without interruption; that ambition and intolerance would not have ventured to oppose it till the sea of human passion and iniquity, which had received a sudden check by its establishment, was again in the flow; and that, during that interim, its moral power would have become so great, that it would only have been those who stood on the very outskirts of its empire on whom the lust of dominion or wealth, or the insidious language of intolerance, could have exercised any influence.*

Unhappily for the church and the world, this was not the case; the zeal and earnestness which it well became the early Christians to feel in the propagation of their faith, was now to be mingled with the leaven of magisterial pride. The humbler professors of the new faith could at first be little affected by the ambitious views of their teachers; but all those who held the same rank, or had a right to the same distinctions, were exposed to a severe trial by the proceedings of their worldly-minded brethren. Many of them remembered too readily the warning, that they were to be wise as serpents; and, in

of Providence, which, as we have seen, now takes place in their favour! Another scourge seemed quickly necessary, a scourge generated from their own vices indeed, though evidently of divine appointment for the chastisement of the church. Satan saw his time: pure doctrinal truth was now too commonly mere speculation. Men were ripe for a perversion of doctrine. Lower or ambiguous views of Christ were secretly rising amidst the Platonic studies of learned men. Origen gave the first handle; Eusebius the historian, with cautious prudence, was fomenting the evil. And at length a bold and open assault was made against the Deity of the Son of God, and persecution was stirred up against Christians by those who bore the name of Christ. The people of God were exercised, refined, and improved; while the Christian world at large was torn in pieces with violence, intrigue, and scandalous animosities, to the grief of all who loved the Son of God, and walked in his ways in godly simplicity. (Milner.)

* Constantine had a great desire to accomplish two very laudable designs:—the first was to propagate Christianity, and to convert unbelievers; the other was to re-unite Christians, and to compose their differences. In the first attempt he succeeded in some measure; but, along with those who were sincere in their profession, there came a multitude of hypocrites and nominal Christians. The latter project he soon found to be impracticable. The Emperor took fruitless pains to settle the strifes of Christendom by Councils and hearings; and finding some of the belligerents extremely refractory, he was provoked to use rough methods, and to banish their ringleaders; but he afterwards recalled them, and gave them up, as he said, like incorrigible fools, to their own madness. Those schismatics, who wrangle in good earnest about trifles, have an incurable understanding, and are unpersuadable; and would fall out with themselves, if they had none else to oppose. (Jortin.)

attempting this, they lost the harmlessness and simplicity of the dove, which typified their religion, and the spirit by which it was inspired. Others lost their trust in the superintending care of divine Providence, and endeavoured to invent projects for the defence of the truth, which had already subdued the hosts raised against it for three hundred years. Some of the most conscientious and enlightened of the Christian teachers were, by degrees, drawn into the ranks of these parties. Thus ambition and zeal became united in the pursuit of an object which seemed to lie midway between earth and heaven. Those who had neither piety nor faith sufficient to raise their thoughts to the ultimate purpose of religion, had the penetration to see how much worldly advantage they might gain by securing a conformity to their opinions in all matters of faith; and those who were in reality instigated by the holiest of motives, often suffered themselves to forget the main blessings of religion in an anxious struggle to procure a conformity, which, if at all attainable, was only to be effected by the ever gentle, but almighty, influences of reason and tolerant piety.*

The Christian church had always been greatly disturbed by Paul of Samosata, and by others, who had taught opinions respecting the person of Christ, contrary to those which were generally maintained; when Arius, a native of Lesbia, or, as others affirm, of Alexandria, was ordained Deacon by Felix, the Prelate of that diocess. He was early distinguished among his contemporaries for extensive learning, and that love of subtle disputation which so naturally inclines the mind to venture beyond its depth, in the hope of passing to the region of full and unclouded truth. It is supposed that Arius was of the school of Lucian of Antioch, who had espoused the opinions of Paul of Samosata, because, in a letter to Eusebius of Nicomedia, Arius calls him by the same name of "Col-Lucianist," which was given to Arius by the opponents to his doctrines,† a circumstance which may account for his subsequent speculations. Before he had been ordained Deacon, he had been attached to the schism of Meletius,‡ the Bishop of Lycopolis, who had been deposed on a charge of having sacrificed to the gods, and of other crimes, and was excommunicated by Peter on account of having disapproved of his severity. After the death of Peter, who is said to have refused to receive him again into communion with the church, even when he was going to his martyrdom, Arius professed repentance for his conduct; and was admitted by Achillas, the successor of Peter, to communion with the church, and to the order of Presbyter. He was then appointed to one of the churches of Alexandria, named Bancalis. Alexander succeeded Achillas in the diocess of Alexandria, about the year 315;§

* Stebbing, History of the Christian Church, vol. i., p. 143.

† On the history of Arianism at Antioch before Nice, see Newman's work on the Arians of the Fourth Century, pp. 8, 9. On the truth or falsehood of Gibbon's opinion, that Arianism was derived from Platonism, see Cudworth's Intellectual System, lib. i., cap. 4.

‡ He was deposed by Peter, Bishop of Alexandria, who was put to death by Maximinus, A.D. 311. This Peter was the immediate predecessor of the accuser of Arius.

§ Socrat., Eccles. Hist., lib. i., cap. 5.

and conversing one day with his Presbyters and Clergy on the subject of the controversies respecting the nature of the Godhead, he expressed some opinions which induced Arius to dissent from him, because they seemed to resemble those of Sabellius;* and affirmed, that the Son of God had a beginning, and was not of the *same* substance or essence with the Father, and therefore not necessarily eternal; but that he was of a *like* substance with the Father, from whom he received a beginning. Having asserted, as the foundation of his reasonings, that the nature of the Deity, and the relation of the Son and of the Holy Ghost to the Father, might be made the subject of a syllogism, he succeeded in convincing some, and unsettling the faith of many. His opinions, for which the soil was already prepared by former heresies, were rapidly diffused over the whole of Egypt, Libya, and the adjacent countries, and at length obtained a powerful advocate in Eusebius, Bishop of Nicomedia. Some time elapsed before Alexander the Bishop could be induced to take any active measures to arrest the heresy. He at length summoned a Council of nearly a hundred Bishops, in the year 322, in the city of Alexandria.† In this Council Arius was excommunicated. Many of the neighbouring Bishops favoured the opinions of Arius. The usual custom, therefore, of rejecting from one church those who had been cast off from communion with another, was not observed. Arius was not only still received by his brethren, but Eusebius of Nicomedia, in the following year, called another Council in Bithynia, in which Arius was declared worthy of being retained in the communion of the church. The affair now began to be of more concern to the churches, because, at this time, every Bishop had the power to frame, or to express in words, the creed of his church, as well as the words of his Liturgy. Alexander, therefore, now writes letters to the Bishops of the surrounding churches, explaining his views of the doctrines of the Trinity. He calls upon them not to break the canons of the church, but to unite with him in expelling Arius and his followers from their communion. Replies were written to these letters by the friends of Arius; and Eusebius, of whom Alexander had spoken reproachfully, became the avowed patron and defender of the heresiarch. Alexander then summoned a second Council at Alexandria in 324, in the presence of Hosius,‡ who had been sent by the Emperor to

* Our business can only be with the consequences of this dispute. For a statement of the opinions of Arius, we refer to Tillemont's History of Arianism, Newman's History of the Arians of the Fourth Century, Maimbourg's History of Arianism, Whitaker's History of Arianism; and also to an elaborate article entitled, "Arians," in the Biblical and Theological Dictionary of the late Rev. Richard Watson.

† Socrat., Hist. Eccles., lib. i., cap. 6.

‡ Hosius had presided over two Synods at Alexandria by order of the Emperor Constantine. The claim of the Bishop of Rome to give validity to the decisions of Councils was not recognised by any contemporary of the fourth century. Hosius presided at every Council where he happened to be present. He held at Nice the first place after Constantine. (Socrat., Hist. Eccles., lib. i., cap. 13.) Next to him were Eustathius, Bishop of Antioch, Peter of Alexandria, then the Legates of the Pope, who are said, *adfuisse*, to have been present; not *præfuisse*, to have presided. There is no authority for the assertion of the Romish writers, Dr. Doyle and others, that Sylvester sent his Presbyters to preside. Baronius says, they were undoubtedly on the left hand of Hosius; Bellarmine, that no Presbyters sate in the General Councils; Delahogue, (De Ecclesiâ,

inquire into the affair, and, if possible, to compose their differences. To this Council Alexander submitted the letters he had written since the first condemnation of Arius, and demanded their opinion on the controversy. The decision of the Council is not recorded : most probably, Hosius decided nothing ; though in this Synod the peculiar terms on which the true doctrine of the church was affirmed to rest, were settled in opposition to Sabellius. The disputes proceeded, and the whole church was convulsed by the vehemence of the opposite parties ; and scandalized by the open insults and mockery of the Pagans around them, even in the public theatre. The language of Alexander was of the most severe and stern nature ; and Eusebius, who was very moderate, endeavoured in vain to reconcile the opposing creeds, and the contending disputants.*

In the mean time Constantine continued to extend his protection to the once persecuted and oppressed church. His acts of liberality were beyond those of a Sovereign disposed to redress the wrongs of an oppressed class of his subjects : he not merely enforced by his edict the restoration of their churches and estates, he enabled them, by his own munificence, his gift of a large sum of money to the Christians of Africa, to rebuild their ruined edifices, and restore their sacred rites with decent solemnity.† Many of the churches in Rome claim the first Christian Emperor for their founder. The most distinguished of these, and, at the same time, those which are best supported in their pretensions to antiquity, stood on the sites now occupied by the Lateran and St. Peter's. If it could be ascertained at what period in the life of Constantine these churches were built, some light might be thrown on the history of his personal religion. For the Lateran being an imperial palace, the grant of a basilica within its walls for the Christian worship (for such we may conjecture to have been the first church) was a kind of direct recognition, if not of his own regular personal attendance, at least of his admission of Christianity within his domestic circle.‡ The palace was afterwards granted to the Christians, the first patrimony of the Popes. The Vatican suburb seems to have been the favourite place for the settlement of foreign relations. It was thickly peopled with Jews from an early period ; and remarkable vestiges of the worship of Cybele, which appears to have flourished side by side, as it were, with that of Christianity, remained to the fourth or the fifth century. The site of St. Peter's church was believed to occupy the spot hallowed by his martyrdom ; and the Christians must have felt no unworthy pride in employing the materials of Nero's circus, the scene

p. 179,) that no simple Presbyter presided, and if present they were representatives of Bishops ; whence the creed was called, the creed of three hundred and eighteen Fathers, who were all Bishops.

* Townsend, Civil and Ecclesiastical History, vol. i., p. 259.

† See the original grant of three thousand *folles* to Cæcilian, Bishop of Carthage, Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. x., cap. 6. The *follis* is generally supposed to be of the value of £6. 10*s*.

‡ The Lateran was the residence of the Princess Fausta : it is called the "domus Faustæ" in the account of the first Synod held to decide on the Donatist schism. (Optat., lib. i., cap. 23.) Fausta may have been a Christian.

of the sanguinary pleasures of the first imperial persecutor, on a church dedicated to the memory of his now honoured, if not absolutely worshipped, victim.

The authority of the Government had been invoked to aid in quieting the Donatist schism; but their interference was ultimately rejected by that party against which the award was made. Three times was the decision repeated in favour of the catholic or orthodox party, at Rome, at Arles, and at Milan: each time was more strongly established the self-evident truth, which was so late recognised by the Christian world, the incompetency of any Council to reconcile religious differences. The suffrages of the many cannot bind the consciences, or enlighten the minds, or even overcome the obstinacy, of the few. Neither party can yield without abandoning the very principles by which they have been constituted a party. An imperial commission of two delegates to Carthage, ratified the decision of former Councils. At every turn the Donatists protested against the equity of the decree; they loudly complained of the unjust and partial influence exercised by Hosius, Bishop of Cordova, over the mind of the Emperor. At length the tardy indignation of the Government had recourse to violent measures. The Donatist Bishops were driven into exile, their churches destroyed or sold, and the property seized for the imperial revenue. The Donatists defied the armed interference, as they had disclaimed the authority, of the Government. This firm development of the principles of Christian sectarianism was as stern, as inflexible, and as persevering as in later times. The Donatists drew their narrow pale around their persecuted sect, and asserted themselves to be the only elect people of Christ,—the only people whose Clergy could claim an unbroken apostolical succession, vitiated in all other communities of Christians by the inexpiable crime of tradition. Wherever they obtained possession of a church, they burned the altar; or, where wood was scarce, they scraped off the infection of heretical communion; they melted the cups, and sold, it was said, the sanctified metal for profane, perhaps for pagan, uses; they re-baptized all who joined their sect; they made the virgins renew their vows; they would not even permit the bodies of the orthodox to repose in peace, lest they should pollute the common cemeteries. The implacable faction darkened into a sanguinary feud. For the first time, human blood was shed in conflicts between followers of the Prince of Peace. Each party recriminated on the other; but neither denies the barbarous scenes of massacre and licence which devastated the African cities. The Donatists boasted of their martyrs, and the cruelties of the orthodox party rest on their own admission: they deny not, they proudly vindicate, their barbarities. "Is the vengeance of God to be defrauded of its victims?" * And they appeal to the Old Testament to justify, by the examples of Moses, of Phinehas,

* This passage is found in the work of the Catholic Optatus: "Quasi omnino in vindictam Dei nullus mereatur occidi." (Compare the whole chapter, lib. iii., cap. 6.) There is a very strong statement of the persecutions which they endured from the Catholics in the letter put in by the Donatist Bishop Habet Deum, in the Conference held during the reign of Honorius. (Apud Dupin, No. 258, in fine.)

and of Elijah, the Christian duty of slaying, by thousands, the renegades, or the unbelievers.*

Christianity, if it had not contributed much to the successes of the victorious Constantine, certainly shared in the triumph. The public acts, the laws and the medals, of Constantine show how the lofty eclectic indifferentism of the Emperor, which extended impartial protection over all the conflicting faiths, or attempted to mingle together their least inharmonious elements, gradually, but slowly, gave place to the progressive influence of Christianity. Christian Bishops appeared as regular attendants upon the Court; the internal dissensions of Christianity became affairs of state; the pagan party saw, with increasing apprehension for their own authority, and the fate of Rome, the period of the secular games, on the due celebration of which depended the duration of the Roman sovereignty, pass away unhonoured. It was an extraordinary change in the constitution of the Western world, when the laws of the empire issued from the court of Treves, and Italy and Africa awaited the changes in their civil and religious constitution from the seat of government on the barbarous German frontier. The munificent grant of Constantine, for the restoration of the African churches, had appeared to commit him in favour of the Christian party, and had perhaps indirectly contributed to inflame the dissensions in that province. The Christian hierarchy and the pagan priesthood were confessedly widely different. The pontifical offices of Paganism, ministering in a ceremonial to which the people were either indifferent, or bound only by habitual attachment, calmly descended in their accustomed course, were nominated by the municipal magistracy, or attached to the higher civil offices; they awoke no ambition, they caused no contention; they did not interest society enough to disturb it. The growth of the sacerdotal power was a necessary consequence of the development of Christianity. The hierarchy asserted (they were believed to possess) the power of sealing the eternal destiny of man. From a post of danger, which modest piety was compelled to assume by the unsought and unsolicited suffrages of the whole community, a bishopric had become an office of dignity, influence, and at times of wealth. The Prelate ruled not now so much by his admitted superiority in Christian virtue, as by the inalienable authority of his office. He opened or closed the door of the church, which was tantamount to an admission or an exclusion from everlasting bliss; he uttered the sentence of excommunication, which cast back the trembling delinquent among the lost and perishing Heathen. He had his throne in the most distinguished part of the Christian temple; and though yet acting in the presence and in the name of his college of Presbyters, he was the acknowledged head of a large community, over whose eternal destiny he had a vague, but not therefore less imposing and awful, dominion. Among the African Christians, perhaps by the commanding character of Cyprian, in his writings at least, the episcopal power is elevated to its utmost height. No wonder that, with the elements of strife fermenting in the society, and hostile parties already arrayed

* Milman, Hist. of Christianity, vol. ii., p. 374.

against each other, the contest for this commanding post should be commenced with blind violence, and carried on with irreconcileable hostility.* The fiery ordeal of persecution tried the Christians of Africa by the most searching test, and drew more strongly the line of demarcation.†

We have lately had to review characters most opposed to the religion of Jesus Christ, whose simultaneous and great effort was to extirpate the name of the Saviour from among the children of men; but we have witnessed Christianity emerging victorious from a period of the darkest trial, and the thunderbolts destined for the faithful falling with aggravated strength upon the persecutors themselves. A striking circumstance, which had a tendency to influence the minds of many, is stated by Eusebius not to have been without effect on Constantine himself. Of all the Emperors who had been invested with the purple, either as Augusti or Cæsars, during the persecution of the Christians, his father alone, the protector of Christianity, had gone down to an honoured and peaceful grave.‡ Diocletian lived long; but in what, no doubt, appeared to most of his former subjects an inglorious retirement. However the philosophy of the abdicated Emperor might teach him to show the vegetables of his garden as worthy of as much interest to a mind of real dignity as the distinctions of worldly honour; however he may have been solicited by a falling and desperate faction to resume the purple; his abdication was, no doubt, in general, attributed to causes less dignified than the contempt of earthly grandeur. Conscious derangement of mind, (a malady inseparably connected, according to the religious notions of Jew, Pagan, probably of Christian, during that age, with the divine displeasure,) or remorse of conscience, was reported to embitter the calm decline of Diocletian's life. Instead of an object of envy, no doubt, in the general sentiment of mankind, he was thought to merit only aversion or contempt. Herculeus, the colleague of Diocletian, after resuming the purple, engaging in base intrigues, or open warfare, against his son Maxentius, and afterwards against his protector Constantine, anticipated his execution. Severus had been made prisoner, and forced to open his own veins; Galerius, the chief author of the persecution, had experienced the most miserable fate,—he had wasted away with a slow, agonizing, and loathsome disease; and Maxentius perished in the mud. "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."

Before the fires of persecution were utterly extinguished, an individual of some eminence underwent martyrdom: we allude to Blaise, Bishop of Sebaste, in Armenia: he was crowned with martyrdom at the command of Agricolaus, Governor of Cappadocia and the Lesser Armenia. During the period of Diocletian's persecution, Blaise had been exposed to numberless hardships, and had undergone a variety

* The principal source of information concerning the Donatist controversy is the works of Optatus, with the valuable collection of documents subjoined to them; and for their later history, various passages in the works of Augustine.

† Milman, History of Christianity, vol. ii., p. 366.

‡ Euseb., Vit. Constant., lib. i., cap. 21; Socrat., Hist. Eccles., lib. i., cap. 11.

of trials, in the defence of the faith of Christ, and for an example to the flock over which he had been appointed overseer. Many Bishops and Priests in Egypt and Libya were arrested about this time, cut into pieces, and thrown into the sea. Hermilus also, who was a Deacon; and Stratonicus, a keeper of a prison, who had recently been converted to the faith, probably by Hermilus; were both, after having endured various tortures, strangled, and thrown into the river Ister.*

It was in vain that Constantine endeavoured to lull into peace and tranquillity the discordant materials which were harboured in the visible church: the afflicted community was rent asunder until the close of his reign, and during that of his son. The barbarous fanaticism of the Circumcelliones† involved the Donatist party in the guilt of insurrection, and connected them with revolting atrocities, which they were accused of countenancing, of exciting, if not actually sanctioning, by their presence. That which in the opulent cities, or the well-ordered communities, led to fierce and irreconcilable contention, grew up among the wild borderers on civilization into fanatical frenzy. When Christianity has outstripped civilization, and has not had time to effect its beneficent and humanizing change, whether in the bosom of an old society, or within the limits of savage life, it becomes, in times of violent excitement, instead of a pacific principle to assuage, a new element of ungovernable strife. The wild tribes had gradually become industrious peasants, and among them Christianity had found an open field for its exertions, and the increasing agricultural settlements had become Christian bishoprics. But the savage was yet only half tamed; and no sooner had the flames of the Donatist conflict spread into these peaceful districts, than the genuine

* Alban Butler says, "It is mentioned, in the Acts of Eustratius, who received the crown of martyrdom in the reign of Diocletian, and is honoured on the 13th of December, that Blaise, the Bishop of Sebaste, honourably received his relics, deposited them with those of Orestes, and punctually executed every article of the last will and testament of Eustratius. His festival is kept a holiday, in the Greek Church, on the 11th of February. He is mentioned in the ancient Western Martyrologies, which bear the name of Jerome: Ado, and Usuard, with several more ancient manuscript Martyrologies, quoted by Chatelain, place his name on the 15th. In the holy wars his relics were dispersed over the West; and his veneration was propagated by many miraculous cures, especially of sore-throats. (!!) He is the principal patron of the commonwealth of Ragusa. No other reason than the great devotion of the people to this celebrated martyr of the church, seems to have given occasion to the wool-combers to choose him the titular patron of their profession; on which account his festival is still kept by them with a solemn guild at Norwich. Perhaps also his country might in part determine them to this choice; for it seems that the first branch, or at least hint, of this manufacture was borrowed from the remotest known countries of the East, as was that of silk; or the iron combs with which he is said to have been tormented, gave occasion to this choice. The iron combs, hooks, racks, swords, and scaffolds, which were purpled with the blood of the martyrs, are eternal proofs of their invincible courage and constancy in the divine service." (Butler's Lives.)

† *Circumcelliones*, a branch of the sect of the Donatists: they abounded chiefly in Africa. They had no fixed abode, but rambled up and down, begging, or rather exacting, a maintenance from the country people. It was from this wandering course of life they had their name. They exercised all sorts of cruelty, and treated every one they met in the most brutal manner. They ran about like madmen, and carried several kinds of arms. This rendered them famous all over the world, and the disgrace of their sect; whence Theodoret, speaking of the Donatists, says scarce anything but what is true only of the Circumcellians. (Henderson.)

Christian was lost in the fiery marauding child of the desert. Maddened by oppression, wounded in his religious feelings by the expulsion and persecution of the Bishops, from his old nature he resumed the fierce spirit of independence, the contempt for the laws of property, and the burning desire of revenge; of his new religion he retained only the perverted language, or rather that of the Old Testament, with an implacable hatred of all hostile sects; a stern ascetic countenance, which perpetually broke out into paroxysms of unbridled licentiousness, and a fanatical passion for martyrdom, which assumed the acts of a kind of methodical insanity. They commenced their outbreaks in the reign of Constantine, who gave the provincial authorities instructions to reduce them by force to a state of religious unity, which drove them into open revolt. They defeated a body of the imperial troops, and killed Ursacius, the Roman General.* They abandoned, by a simultaneous impulse, their agricultural pursuits; they proclaimed themselves the instruments of divine justice, and the protectors of the oppressed; they first asserted the wild theory of the civil equality of mankind, which has so often, in later periods of the world, become the animating principle of Christian fanaticism; they thrust the proud and opulent master from his chariot, and made him walk by the side of his slave, who, in his turn, was placed in the stately vehicle; they cancelled all debts, and released the debtors; their most sanguinary acts were perpetrated in the name of religion, and Christian language was profaned by its association with their atrocities; their leaders were the Captains of the Saints;† the battle-hymn, "Praise to God!" their weapons were not swords, for Christ had forbidden the use of the sword to Peter, but huge and massive clubs, with which they beat their miserable victims to death. They were bound by vows of the severest continence; but the African temperament, in its state of feverish excitement, was too strong for the bonds of fanatical restraint; the companies of the saints not merely abused the privileges of war by the most licentious outrages on the females,

* A full catalogue of the writings of Augustine against the Donatists is given by Dr. Walch, *Historie der Ketzereyen*, vol. iv., p. 254, and of his other efforts against them an account is given, ibid., p. 181. We make here a single remark, that it was during the contests with the Donatists, Augustine first exhibited in his writings that horrid principle,—*Heretics are to be punished with temporal punishments and death*, a principle wholly inconsistent with Christianity, and one which, in after-ages, served as an excuse for inhuman cruelties. Only read Augustine's 48th Epistle *ad Vincent*, and his 50th *ad Bonifacem*, and several others; and you will there meet with all the plausible arguments, which the spirit of persecution in after-ages so dressed up, to the disgrace of Christianity, as to blind the eyes of Kings. (Mosheim.)

† They evidently sprang from the Donatist party, a furious, headlong, sanguinary set, composed of the peasantry and rustic populace, who, espousing the cause of the Donatists, defended it by the force of arms; and roaming through the province of Africa, filled it with slaughter, rapine, and burnings, and committed the most atrocious crimes against the adverse party. This mad throng, which disregarded death and every evil, nay, faced death, when there was occasion, with the greatest boldness, brought extreme odium upon the Donatists; and yet it does not appear, from any competent evidence, that the Donatist Bishops, and especially those possessed of any measure of good sense and religion, approved or instigated their proceedings. The storm continuing to increase, and seeming to threaten a civil war, Constantine, after attempting a reconciliation without effect, at the suggestion of the Prefects of Africa, repealed the laws against the Donatists, and gave the African people full liberty to follow either of the contending parties as they liked best. (Mosheim.)

but were attended by troops of drunken prostitutes, whom they called their sacred virgins. But the most extraordinary development of their fanaticism was their rage for martyrdom. When they could not obtain it from the sword of the enemy, they inflicted it upon themselves. The ambitious martyr declared himself a candidate for the crown of glory; he then gave himself up to every kind of revelry, pampering, as it were, and fattening the victim for sacrifice. When he had wrought himself to the pitch of frenzy, he rushed out, and, with a sword in one hand, and money in the other, he offered rewards to the first comer who would satisfy his longings for the glorious crown, and threatened death to him who should refuse. They leaped from precipices; they went into the pagan temples to provoke the vengeance of the worshippers. Such were the excesses to which Christianity was liable; but this fanaticism rarely bursts out into disorders dangerous to society, unless goaded and maddened by persecution.*

Constantine appears to have enlisted himself very early under the banners of the Christian church, which he had engaged to foster and protect. Very soon after the edict of Milan, we find him publishing laws against heresy, which went so far, in menace, at least, as to transfer the property of heretical Bishops or Ministers to the orthodox. In the list of the proscribed, we find the followers of Paul of Samosata, the Unitarians of those days; the Montanists, who were the enthusiasts; the Novatians, who were the reformers; and two denominations of Gnostics.† But the opinions of the Arians were not yet attacked: perhaps they had not assumed a tangible form, or, at least, were not distinguished and stigmatized by a name. In the freedom exercised by individual opinion on abstruse mysteries under the early church, it is possible that many may have held the doctrine afterwards called Arian; but the controversy seems to have been awakened about the year 319, by the zeal of a Bishop of the church; and the scene of its explosion was that hot-bed of heresy and dissension, Alexandria. These opinions found many and respectable advocates in Asia as well as in Egypt, among the Clergy as well as the laity, and even in the highest ranks of the former; and their number was probably increased, when the Bishop, after condemning the tenets of Arius, in two Councils held in Alexandria, pronounced against him the sentence of excommunication. The quarrel now became so violent, that it was judged necessary to invite the interference of the Emperor. Constantine viewed the whole question as trifling and utterly unimportant;‡ he regretted that the peace of the church should be so vainly disturbed; he lamented that the harmony

* Milman, History of Christianity, vol. ii., p. 378.

† The Marcionites and Valentinians. See Sozomen., Hist. Ecclesiast., lib. ii., cap. 32, and the commencement of Gibbon's 21st chapter. We should rather conclude, however, from Eusebius's account, (Vit. Constantin., lib. iii., cap. 63–66,) that the edict of the Emperor against those heretics was posterior to the Council of Nice. Sozomen asserts, not very accurately, that the effect of the edict was the destruction of all excepting the Novatians, against whom it was not seriously enforced.

‡ Constantine's Epistle appears in Eusebius. (Vit. Constantin., lib. ii., cap. 64–72.) In cap. 71 the Emperor rebukes the parties for "disputing about trifling, and most truly insignificant, matters." This account is, upon the whole, confirmed by Sozomen., Hist. Eccles., lib. i., cap. 15, 16; Socrat., Hist. Eccles., lib. i., cap. 7.

of Christians, who were united on so many subjects of infinite weight, should be interrupted by such unprofitable speculations; and, in the epistle containing those sentiments, he enjoined peace to both parties. Constantine knew not the nature of the tempest which was excited; for neither experience nor history had yet presented to him anything resembling it. However, he had adopted the only measure which offered any hope of appeasing it; and, had he persisted in his neutrality, it is probable that the Arian controversy, after some noisy debates and angry invectives, would have discharged its passion in words, and the heresy itself would have fallen into dishonour, almost into oblivion, like many others.* But the firmness of the Emperor was not proof against the importunity of the orthodox Prelates, seconded, as some think, by his own theological vanity: a General Council was suggested as the only remedy for the evil, and the Emperor would, of course, preside over its deliberations. Still the affair was some little time in suspense; and that was perhaps the most critical moment in ecclesiastical history, in which Constantine determined to convoke the Council of Nice.

It is comparatively easy to assert, that silence and charity would have been the best means of preserving peace on all sides; but then this mode of speaking supposes that the controversy was frivolous. No real Christian can think it unimportant whether his Saviour be believed to be the Creator, or a creature. The soul is of too great consequence for men to hazard its salvation on they know not what. And it then appeared to all humble and charitable Christians, that to persist in blaspheming God, was at least as practical an evil as to continue in drunkenness and theft. All these found themselves obliged to join with Alexander against Arius. Silence was a vice in this case; though it never can be enough lamented how little care was taken of humility and charity, of both which the exercise is perfectly consistent with the sincere zeal for the doctrine of the Trinity; but true religion itself was low; the face of the church was "sullied and dishonoured, yet still divine." And amidst the numbers who, from fashion, prejudice, or worse motives, joined with the Alexandrian Bishop, we must look for those, though they are hard to be found, who feared God, and whose history alone is the subject before us. The principles of Arius exclude him and his followers, and, by the fullest light of antiquity, their actions also exclude them, from being numbered among the sound, faithful, intelligent followers of

* Jortin has suggested another method, in the following very rational passage:—"If, when the quarrel between Alexander and Arius was grown to such a height as to want a remedy, the Fathers of the church had, for the sake of peace, agreed to draw up a Confession of Faith in words of Scripture, and to establish the divinity of Christ on the expressions used by the Apostles, every one might have assented to it, and the Arian party would most certainly have received it. The difference of sentiments, indeed, and of interpretation, would not have ceased; but the controversy would have cooled, and dwindled away, after every champion had discharged his zeal upon paper, and written to his heart's content. The Arian notion that the *Son was created in time*, and that *there was a time when he existed not*, would probably have sunk, as not being the language of the New Testament; and the Macedonian notion, that the *Holy Ghost was created in time*, would have sunk with the other, for the same reason; at least these opinions would never have been obtruded upon us as articles of faith."

Jesus. The Christian world now became the scene of animosity and contention. The orthodox and the heretical did each their utmost to support their several pretensions; practical religion was too much forgotten on both sides; and the former, from the want, or, at least, from the very low state, of experimental religion, were deprived of the very best method of supporting the truth, by showing its necessary connexion with the foundation of true piety and virtue. The Gentiles * beheld the contest and triumphed; and on their theatres they ridiculed the contentions of Christians, to which the long and grievous provocations of their God had justly exposed them. Alexander repeatedly, in letters and appeals, maintained his cause, and, so far as speculative argumentation can do it, he proved his point from the Scriptures; while Arius strengthened himself by forming alliances with various Bishops, and particularly with Eusebius of Nicomedia.† He had been translated from Berytus in Syria; and by living in the metropolis, (for there Constantine resided much,) he had an opportunity of ingratiating himself with the Emperor.‡

Notwithstanding the assumption of ecclesiastical supremacy by the Emperor, which ultimately proved the fruitful source of tyranny and persecution, the church retained in many respects its separate existence, or at least the freedom of its autonomous constitution: indeed, had not this been so, the term "alliance," which is used to designate the union of Church and State under Constantine, as it implies a certain degree of independence in both parties, would be unmeaning and out of place. Some immediate advantages were also reaped by the Church: much that it formerly held by sufferance, it now possessed by law; many privileges, which had hitherto existed through the connivance only, or the ignorance, of the Government, were now converted into rights, and as such confirmed and perpetuated. Constantine divided the administration of the Church into, (1.) Internal, and, (2.) External. The former continued, as heretofore, in the hands of the Prelates, individually and in Council: little or no alteration was introduced into this department; and it comprehended nearly everything which was really tangible and available in the power of the Church before its association with the State, now confirmed to it by that association. The settlement of religious controversies was recommended to the wisdom of the hierarchy; § the forms of divine worship, the regulation of customary rites and ceremonies, or the institution of new ones, the ordination and offices of the priesthood, which included the unrestrained right of public preaching, and the formidable weapon of spiritual censure, were left to the exclusive direction of the Church. The freedom of episcopal election was not violated; and the Bishops retained their power to convoke legislative Synods twice a year in every diocess, uncontrolled by the civil Magistrate.

* We adopt the language of the times in calling the pagan world Gentiles. (Socrat., Hist. Eccles., lib. i., cap. 6.)

† Who must not be confounded with Eusebius of Cæsarea, the historian.

‡ Milner, History of the Church, cent. iv., chap. iii., vol. i., p. 519.

§ A rescript of Constantine to the provincial Bishops on the disputes between Athanasius and Eusebius of Nicomedia, admits, "Vestri est, non mei judicii, de eâ recognoscere." (See Baronius ad Ann. 329, sect. 8.)

By the edict of Milan the possessions of the Church were restored, and its legal right to them for the first time acknowledged; and this act of justice was followed in the year 321 by another edict, which permitted all subjects to bequeath property to that body.* Exemption from all civil offices, we have already seen, was granted to the whole body of the Clergy;† and perhaps a more important privilege, about the same time conferred on the higher orders, was that of independent jurisdiction, even in capital charges, over their members: so that the Bishops alone, among the myriads of the subjects of the empire, enjoyed the right of being tried by their peers. This was not granted with any intention of securing their impunity; for, though degradation was the severest punishment which could be inflicted by a spiritual court, the penalty was liable to increase, after condemnation, by the interference of the secular authority. While we may consider the free trial of the Bishops, in a political light, as another important inroad into the pure despotism of the imperial system, we are also assured, that on the body thus exclusively possessing it, it conferred no inconsiderable advantages. But another privilege, even more valuable than this, and one which will more constantly be present to us in the review of succeeding ages, is traced with equal certainty to the legislation of Constantine. The arbitration of Bishops in the civil differences referred to them in their diocess, was now ratified by law; and their decisions, of which the validity had formerly depended on the consent of the parties, were henceforward enforced by the civil Magistrate. On this foundation was imperceptibly established the vast and durable edifice of ecclesiastical jurisdiction; from this simple legalization of an ancient custom, in process of time, the most substantial portion of sacerdotal power proceeded, and the most extravagant pretensions of spiritual ambition. But those consequences convey no reflection on the wisdom of Constantine, since they were produced by circumstances which he could not possibly foresee; and which, besides, never influenced, to any great extent, the Eastern division of Christendom. Here, then, we cannot fail to perceive a powerful, self-regulated body, armed with very ample and extensive authority; and supported, when such support was necessary, by the secular arm. Let us now proceed to the second division, or the external administration of the Church. Of this department the Emperor assumed the entire control to himself.‡ It comprehended everything relating to the outward state and discipline of the Church; and was understood to include a certain degree of superintendence over such contests and debates as might arise among the Ministers, of whatsoever rank, concerning their possessions, their reputation, their rights and privileges, as well as their political or other offences against the laws of the empire. Even the

* Constantine's personal generosity to the Church, as well as his deference to the episcopal orders, is mentioned by Eusebius, (De Vit. Constantin., lib. i., cap. 42,) and was continued throughout his reign. The Pagan Zosimus, lib. ii., remarks on the profusion of money which he wasted upon "useless persons."

† Baronii Annal. Ecclesiast., ad Ann. 319, sect. 30.

‡ The authority assumed by the Emperors appears, under various titles, in the sixteenth book of the Theodosian Code; as also in the Code of Justinian.

final decision of religious controversies was subjected to the discretion of Judges appointed by the Emperor.* The same terminated any differences which might arise between the Bishops and people, fixed the limits of the ecclesiastical provinces, took cognizance of the civil causes subsisting between Ministers, and lent his power to the execution of the punishment due to their criminal offences. And though the right of convoking local and provincial Synods remained with the Church, that of assembling a General Council was exercised only by the Prince.†

The principal objects which the Prelates of the several churches, composing, all together, the one holy Catholic Church, had in view in calling together the early Synods, were,—to form those rules or canons by which they might establish the best regulation of conduct to the faithful in general, and to the Ministers of the Church in particular; to point out those duties which their vocation and ministry require; the modes by which incipient errors may be repressed at their commencement, and obstinate errors most effectually rooted out; to ascertain the best means of reforming offenders; to affix suitable penances for each fault; to prescribe the discipline respecting the admission to, or the rejection from, the participation of the sacraments; the amount of knowledge, and the proofs of good conduct, requisite for the candidates for the sacred offices; what proofs of their fitness should be demanded; and what fidelity and moderation in dispensing the demands of the Church should be required. These may be regarded as a portion of the general business of the early Synods: yet there were always more particular and especial reasons for which each of these high ecclesiastical tribunals was convened. The alleged cause for which the first General Council was called,‡ was the heresy of Arius and those of his sect. With regard to the more especial cause for summoning the Council of Nice, we must recollect the great disorders in the Church, caused by the contumacy of the Donatists; of whose conduct an account has been already given. We have seen that this schism originated in a cause by no means of sufficient importance to have been made a plea for that disunion which resulted from, much less for the calamities which spread on

* Constantine and his successors assembled Councils, presided in them, assigned Judges for religious disputes, decided contests between Bishops and their people, determined the limits of ecclesiastical provinces, and by the ordinary Judges heard and decided upon the civil causes and common offences among the Ministers of the Church: ecclesiastical causes, on the other hand, he left to the cognizance of Councils and Bishops. (Mosheim.)

† Waddington, History of the Church, vol. i., p. 181, 8vo. edit., London, 1835.

‡ The Bishops met together in Conventions or Councils, to deliberate on subjects in which the churches of a whole province were interested, on points of religious controversy, on the arrangement of divine worship, and other things. To these minor Councils of one or more provinces, there were now added assemblies or Councils of the whole Church. Those called *Œcumenical*, or *General Councils*, met by authority from the Emperor, who summoned the first at Nice. For he thought it just, (and in this he was most likely guided by the judgment of the Bishops,) that causes of great moment, and affecting the Church universally, or the general principles of Christianity, should be examined and decided in Conventions of the whole Church. There were never indeed any Councils held, which could strictly and properly be called *universal*: those, however, whose decrees and enactments were received and approved by the whole Church, or by the greatest part of it, are commonly called *Œcumenical*. (Mosheim.)

account of, their irreconcilable obstinacy. Open resistance to the decisions of many local Synods, and to the judgment of the Emperor, to whom the sectarians had appealed, was carried to such extremes, as to threaten rebellion throughout the African provinces of the empire; and the resentment of the heretical partisans was raging to a great degree of violence at the time when the unfortunate disputes concerning the Arian heresy commenced. The vexations which the mind of the first Christian Emperor suffered from the provocations of the Donatists, and the desire, if possible, to prevent a similar calamity from the Arian dissension, appear to have been the powerful motives which induced Constantine to summon the Council of Nice.*

It was during the summer of 325 that the great Council of Nice met. Not half a century before, the Christian Bishops had been only marked as the objects of the most cruel insult and persecution. They had been chosen, on account of their eminence in their own communities, as the peculiar victims of the stern policy of the Government. They had been driven into exile, set to work in the mines, exposed to every kind of humiliation and suffering, from which some in mercy had been released by death. They now assembled under the imperial sanction, a religious senate, from all parts at least of the Eastern world; for Italy was represented only by two Presbyters of Rome; Hosius appeared for Spain, Gaul, and Britain. The spectacle was altogether new to the world. No wide-ruling Sovereign would ever have thought of summoning a conclave of the sacerdotal orders of the different religions; a Synod of philosophers, to debate some grave metaphysical or even political question, was equally inconsistent with the ordinary usages and sentiments of Grecian or Roman society. The public establishment of post-horses was commanded to afford every facility, and that gratuitously, for the journey of the assembling Bishops.† Vehicles or mules were to be provided, as though the assembly were an affair of State, at the public charge. At a later period, when Councils became more frequent, the heathen historian complains, that the public service was impeded, and the post-horses harassed and exhausted, by the incessant journeying to and fro of the Christian delegates to their Councils. They were sumptuously maintained during the sitting at the public charge.‡ Above three hundred Prelates were supposed to have been present; Presbyters, Deacons, and other inferior officers, without number. Some degree of doubt exists with regard to the edifice in which the debates took place. According to an expression in Eusebius, it would appear that the imperial palace was the scene of the contest between the rival parties;§ but it has been properly observed, that it would detract much from the authority of the Council to believe that it held its sittings in the residence of the Emperor; and the most probable supposition is, that it carried on its various preliminary consultations in

* Townsend, Civil and Eccles. History, vol. i., p. 264.

† Euseb., De Vita Constantin., lib. iii., cap. 6; Theodoret, Hist. Eccles., lib. i., cap. 7.

‡ Euseb., De Vita Constant., lib. iii., cap. 9.

§ Ibid., lib. iii., cap. 10.

the principal church of the place; and that it was not till they were on the point of concluding the debate that they assembled in the palace, and propounded their opinions for the approbation of the Emperor. However this may be, on the day appointed for the solemn assembling of the Council in the imperial presence, the central hall of the palace was opened to the throngs of Ecclesiastics who had come from all parts of the world to deliver their opinions on the important questions in dispute. The presence of the Emperor gave the chief weight and dignity to the assembly. Nothing could so much confirm the Christians in the opinion of their altered position, or declare to the world at large the growing power of Christianity, as this avowed interest taken in their domestic concerns; or so tend to raise the importance attached even to the more remote and speculative doctrines of the new faith, as this unprecedented condescension, so it would seem to the Heathen, on the part of the Emperor. The Council met probably in a spacious basilica.* Eusebius describes the scene as having deeply impressed him with its solemnity. The assembly sate in profound silence, while the great officers of state, and other dignified persons, (there was no armed guard,) entered the hall, and awaited, in proud and trembling expectation, the appearance of the Emperor of the world in a Christian Council. Constantine at length entered; he was splendidly attired; the eyes of the Bishops were dazzled by the gold and precious stones upon his raiment. The majesty of his person and the modest dignity of his demeanour heightened the effect: the whole assembly rose to do him honour: he advanced to a low golden chair prepared for him, and did not take his seat (it is difficult not to suspect Eusebius, says Mr. Milman, of highly colouring the deference of the Emperor) till a sign of permission by the Bishops. One of the leading Prelates, probably Eusebius the historian, commenced the proceedings with a short address, and also a hymn to Almighty God. Constantine then delivered an exhortation to unity in the Latin language, which was interpreted to the Greek Bishops. His admonition seems at first to have produced no great effect: mutual accusation, defence, and recrimination prolonged the debate. A number of mutual accusations having been presented to him, he threw them all into the fire, protesting that he had not read one of them, and charging them to forbear, and to forgive one another.† After this very candid and generous procedure, he gave them leave to enter directly on the business of the Synod. Constantine seems to have been present during the greater part of the sittings, listening with patience, softening asperities, countenancing those whose language tended to peace and union, and conversing familiarly, in the best Greek he could command, with the different Prelates. The courtly flattery of the Council might attribute to Constantine himself what was secretly suggested by Hosius,

* There is a long note in Heinichen's Eusebius, to prove that they did not meet in the palace, but in a church: as though the authority of their proceedings depended upon the place of assembly. It was probably a basilica, or hall of justice; the kind of building usually made over by the Government for the purposes of Christian worship; and, in general, the model of the earliest Christian edifices.

† Sozom., Hist. Eccles., lib. i., cap. 17; Socrat., Hist. Eccles., lib. i., cap. 8.

the Bishop of Cordova. For, powerful and comprehensive as his mind may have been, it is incredible that a man so educated, and engaged during the early period of his life with military and civil affairs, could have entered, particularly being imperfectly acquainted with the Greek language, into these discussions on religious metaphysics.*

The historian Milner informs us, that, before the immediate business of the Synod was entered upon, their attention was engaged by the attempts of some Gentile philosophers, who appeared among them, some with a design to satisfy their curiosity concerning Christianity itself; others wishing to involve the Christians in a cloud of verbal subtilties, and to enjoy the mutual contradictions of the followers of Christ. One of them distinguished himself above the rest by the pomp and arrogancy of his pretensions, and derided the Clergy as ignorant and illiterate. On this occasion an old Christian, who had suffered with magnanimous constancy during the late persecutions, though unacquainted with logical forms, undertook to contend with the philosopher. Those who were more earnest to gratify curiosity than to investigate truth, endeavoured to raise a laugh at the old man's expense; while serious spirits were distressed to see a contest apparently so unequal. Respect for the man, however, induced them to permit him to engage; and he immediately addressed the philosopher in these terms: "Hear, philosopher," says he, "in the name of Jesus Christ. There is one God, the Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible; who made all these things by the power of his Word, and confirmed them by the holiness of his Spirit. This Word, whom we call the Son of God, compassionating the sons of men involved in error and wickedness, chose to be born of a woman, to converse with men, and to die for them; and he will come again as the Judge of all things which men have done in the body. That these things are so, we believe in simplicity: do not, then, labour in vain, investigating the manner in which these things may or may not be, and seeking to confute things which ought to be received by faith: but if thou believest, answer, now that I ask thee." Struck with this plain, authoritative address, the philosopher said, "I do believe;" with pleasure owned himself vanquished, confessed that he embraced the same sentiments with the old man, and advised the other philosophers to do the same, swearing that he was changed by a divine influence, and moved by an energy which he could not explain.†

Men will draw their conclusions, continues the historian, from this story, according to their different tastes and views. A self-sufficient reasoner will despise the instruction it contains; but he who thinks with St. Paul, will consider the whole story as no mean comment on his words, "that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God;" nor will he much regard the prudence of those who labour to accommodate Christian ideas to the spirit of unbelievers, by which they only weaken themselves, and abate not

* Milman, History of Christianity, vol. ii., p. 441.

† Sozom., Hist. Eccles., lib. i., cap. 18.

in the least the enmity of their opposers. They will think it better to go forth in simple dependence on God, trusting that he will bless his own word with victorious energy. Such know that even in our own times there want not instances of conversions of a similar kind; and those who are still disposed to object should at least be told, that the story has all the proper marks of historical credibility, whatever inferences they may be pleased to draw from it.*

When Constantine had concluded his opening address, many and vehement discussions took place, to which the Emperor paid the utmost attention, and in which he exhibited the part of a kind and conciliating moderator with great prudence. The creed of the Arian party, which had been drawn up and presented by Eusebius of Cæsarea, was considered unsatisfactory, and was rejected as heretical. The venerable Hosius, of Cordova, was appointed to draw up a creed, which is, in the main, the same that is called the Nicene Creed to this day. This formula was the result of the solemn deliberation of the assembly. It was conceived with some degree of Oriental indefiniteness, harmonized with Grecian subtlety of expression. The vague and somewhat imaginative fulness of its original Eastern terms, was not too severely limited by the fine precision of its definitions. One fatal word broke the harmony of assent with which it was received by the whole Council. Christ was declared *homoousios*, of the same *substance* with the Father;† and the undeniable, if perhaps inevitable, ambiguity of this single term, involved Christianity in centuries of hostility. To one party it implied absolute identity, and was therefore only ill-disguised Sabellianism; to the other it was essential to the co-equal and co-eval dignity of the three Persons in the Godhead. To some of the Syrian Bishops it implied or countenanced the material notion of the Deity. It was, as it is said by one ecclesiastical historian, a battle in the night, in which neither party could see the meaning of the other. The Creed, however, was agreed upon by almost all parties present, as most expressively declaratory of the identity of essence between the Father and Son, but which the Arians refused to insert in the Creed of Eusebius,‡ was tendered to the Council, and accepted by them as the confession of their faith, and adopted as their conclusions on the controverted questions. Anathemas were added against all who introduced the heretical formula; and Arius and his immediate followers were mentioned by

* Milner, History of the Church, vol. i., cent. iv., chap. iii., p. 522.

† Athanasius himself allowed, that the Bishops who deposed Paul of Samosata were justified in rejecting the word ὁμοούσιον, because they understood it in a material or corporeal sense.

‡ Eusebius, of Cæsarea, the historian, expressed for some time his doubt concerning the term "consubstantial." He observed, in a letter which he wrote on that occasion to his church, that all the mischief had arisen from the use of unscriptural terms, and that he at last had subscribed to the term for the sake of peace. It would undoubtedly be unjust to accuse this great man of Arianism. Yet why was he so much disposed to favour Arius by writing to Alexander as if he had been wronged? Why so disposed to join afterwards the Arians against Athanasius? The truth is, he seems to have held a middle notion, that the Son of God was from eternity, but was not Jehovah; the very same notion, if I mistake not, which was revived by Dr. Samuel Clark, explained in his Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity, and very solidly confuted by Dr. Waterland in his reply. (Milner.)

name.* The result of the whole was, that Arius was deposed, excommunicated, and forbidden to enter Alexandria. The minority at first refused to subscribe; but being advised at length to yield by Constantia, their patroness, the Emperor's sister, they consented. But by the insertion of a single letter they reserved to themselves their own sense, subscribing not that the Son is the same, but only of a like, essence with the Father.† Honesty is, however, always respectable. Out of twenty-two Arian Bishops, two were found who persisted in refusing: Secundus of Ptolemais, and Theonas of Marmorica; the former of whom bluntly rebuked the courtly Eusebius of Nicomedia for his dissimulation. Arius and his associates were banished into Illyricum.

Tranquillity was restored to the church in appearance only. The *quæstio vexata* was set at rest by the united authority of the Emperor and a representative body, which might fairly presume to deliver the sentiments of the whole Christian world. But the Arians were condemned, not convinced; discomfited, not subdued.‡ After the death of Helena, Constantine showed particular kindness to Constantia, his sister, who was much led by a Presbyter secretly in the Arian interest. They persuaded her that Arius and his friends were unjustly condemned. She, on her death-bed, prevailed by her entreaties on Constantine to do justice to these men. The Emperor, who seemed as much a child in religious discernment as he was a man in political sagacity, suffered himself to be imposed on by the ambiguous craft of Arius and his friend Euzoius, so as to write in their favour to the churches. Eusebius also, and Theognis, by owning the Nicene faith in words, were restored to their sees. Rather more than two years elapsed, eventful in the private life of Constantine, but tranquil in the history of the Christian church. The imperial assessor in the Christian Council had appeared in the West under a different character, as the murderer of his son and of his wife. He returned to the East, determined no more to visit the imperial city, where, instead of the humble deference with which all parties courted his approbation, he

* Newman, Arians of the Fourth Century, p. 273. Mr. Townsend remarks: "I cannot agree with Mr. Newman in his observations on the justice of inflicting penalties upon a real or supposed heretic or heresiarch. If a disciple of Christ believe that he has discovered in the New Testament a doctrine which has been unperceived by the world, he ought to be at liberty to hold it, and to submit it to the examination and consideration of the church. Mr. Newman does not think so. In this, he observes, lies the difference between the treatment due to an individual in error, and to one who is confident enough to publish his innovations: the former claims from us the most affectionate sympathy and the most considerate attention. The latter should meet with no mercy. He assumes the office of the tempter, and, so far forth as his error goes, must be dealt with by the competent authority, as if he were embodied evil. To spare him is a false and dangerous pity. It is to endanger the souls of thousands, and it is uncharitable towards himself." (Pp. 252, 253.)

† Not *ὁμοούσιος*, but *ὁμοιούσιος*. It is remarkable that this duplicity of theirs is recorded by Philostorgius, the Arian historian. (Hist. Eccles., lib. i., cap. 8.) "They subscribed to the confession of faith by arts of treachery and deceit, reserving to themselves their own sense, and subscribing not *ὁμοούσιος*, but *ὁμοιούσιος*, not that the Son of is of the same, but only of a like, essence with the Father." (Cave's Life of Athanasius.)

‡ The writings of Arius and his followers were condemned to be burned. If we are to believe Sozomen, the concealment of such heretical works was made a capital offence. (Soz., Hist. Eccles., lib. i., cap. 21.)

had been unable to close his ears against the audacious and bitter pasquinade which arraigned his cruelty to his own family. His return to the East, instead of overawing the contending factions into that unity, which he declared to be the dearest wish of his heart, by his own sudden change of conduct was the signal for the revival of the fiercest contentions. The Christian community was now to pay a heavy penalty for the pride and triumph with which they had hailed the interference of the Emperor in their religious questions. The imperial decisions had been admitted by the dominant party, when on their own side, to add weight to the decree of the Council; at least, they had applauded the sentence of banishment pronounced by the civil power against their antagonists: that authority now assumed a different tone, and was almost warranted, by their own admission, in expecting the same prompt obedience. The power which had exiled might restore the heretic to his place and station. Court influence, obtained, however, through court intrigue, or from the caprice of the ruling Sovereign, by this fatal, perhaps inevitable, step, became the arbiter of the most vital questions of Christian faith and discipline; and thus the first precedent of a temporal punishment for an ecclesiastical offence was a dark prognostic, and an example of the difficulties which would arise during the whole history of Christianity, when the communities, so distinctly two when they were separate and adverse, became one by the identification of the church and the state. The restoration of a banished man to the privileges of a citizen by the civil power, seemed to command his restoration to religious privileges by the ecclesiastical authority.* The opinions of Constantine were certainly on the wane, and the Arian party gradually grew into favour. Arius could not believe the sudden reverse of fortune; and not till he received a pressing letter from Constantine himself, did he venture to leave his place of exile. A person of still greater importance was, at the same time, re-instated in the imperial favour. Among the adherents of the Arian form, perhaps the most important was Eusebius, Bishop of Nicomedia. A dangerous suspicion that he had been too closely connected with the interests of Licinius, in his struggle for the empire, had alienated the mind of Constantine from him, and deprived the Prelate of that respectful attention which he might have commanded by his station, ability, and experience. This Bishop, in company with Theognis, the Bishop of Nice, both of whom had been sent into exile, returned in triumph to their diocesses, and ejected the Prelates who had been appointed in their place. But the Arians were not content with their peaceable re-establishment in their former station. Eusebius, whom Constantine had before publicly denounced in no measured terms, grew rapidly into favour. The complete dominion which, from this time, he appears to have exercised over the mind of Constantine, confirms the natural suspicion that the opinions of the Emperor were by no means formed by his own independent judgment, but entirely governed by the Christian teacher who might obtain his favour. In this respect, Eusebius succeeded to the post which was

* Socrat., Hist. Eccles., lib. i., cap. 25, 26; Sozom., Hist. Eccles., lib. ii., cap. 27.

formerly occupied by Hosius. Arianism was now in the ascendant; they were in possession of some of the most important diocesses of Asia, and they thirsted for the supremacy in Antioch.*

Eusebius and Theognis passed through Antioch on their way to Jerusalem; and, on their return, summoned Eustathius, the Bishop of Antioch, whose character had hitherto been blameless, to answer before a hastily-assembled Council of Bishops, on two distinct charges of immorality and heresy. The unseemly practice of bringing forward women of disreputable character, to charge men of high station in the church with incontinency, formerly employed by the Heathen to calumniate the Christians, was now adopted by the reckless hostility of Christian faction. The accusation of a prostitute against Eustathius, of having been the father of her child, is said afterwards to have been completely disproved. The heresy with which Eustathius was charged, was that of Sabellianism, the usual imputation of the Arians against the Trinitarians of the opposite creed. Two Arian Bishops having occupied the see of Antioch, but for a very short time, an attempt was made to remove Eusebius of Cæsarea to that diocess, no doubt, by the high reputation of his talents, to overawe or to conciliate the Eustathian party. Eusebius, with the flattering approbation of the Emperor, declined the dangerous post. Eustathius was deposed, and banished, by the imperial edict, to Thrace; but the attachment, at least of a large part, of the Christian population of Antioch refused to acknowledge the authority of the tribunal, or the justice of the sentence. The city was divided into two fierce and hostile factions; they were on the verge of civil war; and Antioch, where the Christians had first formed themselves into a separate community, but for the vigorous interference of the civil power, and the timely appearance of an imperial commissioner, might have witnessed the first blood shed, at least in the East, in a Christian quarrel.†

Athanasius had been raised, by the discernment of Alexander, to a station of confidence and dignity in ecclesiastical affairs. He had filled the office of Secretary to the Prelate of Alexandria. He also bore a distinguished part in the Council of Nice; and his zeal and talents pointed to him as the future head of the orthodox, or Trinitarian, party. On the death of Alexander, the universal voice of the predominant anti-Arians demanded the elevation of Athanasius. In vain did he endeavour to elude the honour which his friends would thrust upon him; and, at thirty years of age, Athanasius was placed on the episcopal throne of the see which ranked with Antioch, and afterwards with Constantinople, as the most important spiritual charge in the East. An imperial mandate was speedily issued, to receive Arius and his followers within the pale of the Christian communion; but the Emperor found, to his astonishment and dismay, that his imperial edict, which in times gone by would have been obeyed with trembling and servile submission, even if it had gone so far as to enjoin on the empire a complete political revolution, or endangered the property and privileges of thousands, was received

* Milman, History of Christianity, vol. ii., p. 448. † Ibid., p. 449.

with deliberate and steady disregard by one junior Christian Prelate. The mitre of Athanasius, so far from being cushioned with down, was lined with thorns; and instead of finding a resting-place on his brow, it was restless and without peace: during two reigns he contested the authority of the Emperor. He weathered tempests of persecution which were hurled upon him by individuals bearing the Christian name. His life was frequently endangered in defence of one single tenet, and that the most purely intellectual, and apparently the most remote from the ordinary passions of man. He confronted martyrdom, not for the broad and tangible distinction between Christianity and Heathenism, but for fine and subtle expressions of the Christian creed. He began and continued the contest, not for the toleration, but for the supremacy, of his own opinions. Neither of the contending parties could now, in truth, yield without the humiliating acknowledgment, that all the contest had been on unimportant and unessential points. The passions and the interests, as well as the conscience, were committed in the strife. The severe and uncompromising temper of Athanasius, no doubt, gave some advantage to his jealous and watchful opponents. Criminal charges began to multiply against a Prelate who was thus fallen in the imperial favour,* which were industriously instilled into the ears of Constantine: nevertheless, the extreme frivolousness of some of these accusations, and the triumphant refutation of the more material charges before a tribunal of his enemies, establish, undeniably, the unblemished virtue of Athanasius.†

The heaviest crimes were consequently charged upon Athanasius, such as rebellion, oppression, rape, and murder. The Arians, through Eusebius of Nicomedia, obtained the convocation of a Council at Tyre from the Emperor Constantine, under pretence of thereby healing the divisions which existed among the Bishops; but their real intention was to oppress Athanasius. The Bishops who were summoned to attend were selected by the Eusebian party, and came from Egypt, Libya, Asia, and most of the eastern provinces: the most noted were Marius of Chalcedon, Theognis of Nicæa, Ursaces of Singidunum, and Valens of Mursia; in all, about sixty Arian Bishops attended. There were also a few Prelates present who were not of the Eusebian faction; as Maximus of Jerusalem, Marcellus of Ancyra, Alexander of Thessalonica. Constantine sent the Count Dionysius to keep order; who, as the event showed, was completely devoted to the Eusebian cause, and by his violence destroyed all liberty of debate. Athanasius, who was compelled by the order

* Milman, History of Christianity, vol. ii., p. 451.

† "It is remarkable," says Milman, "how little stress is laid on the persecutions which Athanasius is accused of having carried on through the civil authority." "Accusatus præterea est de injuriis, violentiâ, cæde, atque ipsâ Episcoporum internecione. Quique etiam diebus sacratissimis paschæ tyrannico more sæviens, Ducibus atque Comitibus junctus: quique propter ipsam aliquos in custodia recludebant, aliquos vero verberibus flagellisque vexabant, cæteros diversis tormentis ad communionem ejus sacrilegam adigebant." These charges neither seem to have been pressed nor refuted, as half so important as the act of sacrilege. (See the Protest of the Arian Bishops at Sardica, in Hilarii Oper., Hist. Fragm., lib. iii., cap. 6; see also the accusations of violence on his return to Alexandria, ibid., cap. 8.)

of the Emperor, came to the Council, attended by forty-nine Egyptian Bishops, amongst whom were Potamon and Paphnutius. No accusation was brought against the Bishop on account of his faith; but two cases shall be mentioned, by which a judgment may be formed of all the rest. He was said to have murdered Arsenius, a Meletian Prelate; in proof of which the accusers produced a box, out of which they took a dead man's hand, dried and salted, which they affirmed to be the hand of Arsenius, and that it was preserved by Athanasius for magical purposes. The Meletians charged Arsenius to conceal himself till they had effected their purpose. The party of Eusebius of Nicomedia spread the report through the Christian world, that Arsenius had been privately murdered by the Bishop of Alexandria; and Constantine himself, overcome by incessant importunities, was induced to order an inquiry to be made.* Athanasius had learned, by his own experience, that any accusation against himself, however improbable, was likely to find numerous and powerful supporters; but Providence wonderfully confuted this attempt. Arsenius,† notwithstanding the directions of the accusers to keep close, had privately conveyed himself to Tyre, intending to be secreted there during the whole time of the Synod. It happened that some servants, belonging to Archelaus the Governor, heard a rumour whispered, that Arsenius was in the town. This they immediately told their master, who found him out, apprehended him, and gave notice to Athanasius. The Meletian tool, unwilling to blast his employers, and feeling the awkwardness of his situation, at first denied himself to be Arsenius. Happily, Paul, the Bishop of Tyre, who knew the man, deprived him of that refuge. The day of trial being come, the prosecutors boasted that they should give ocular demonstration to the court of the guilt of Athanasius, and produced the dead hand. A shout of victory rung through the Synod. Silence being made, Athanasius asked the Judges, if any of them knew Arsenius. Several affirming that they did, Athanasius directs the man to be brought into court; and asks, "Is this the man whom I murdered, and whose hand I cut off?" Athanasius turns back the man's cloak, and shows one of his hands; after a little pause, he puts back the other side of the cloak, and shows the other hand. "Gentlemen, you see," said he, "that Arsenius has both his hands: how the accusers came by the third hand, let them explain." Thus ended the plot to the shame of the contrivers. That any persons who bear the name of Christ should deliberately be guilty of such atrocious villany, is deeply to be regretted. But let it be remembered, that the real faith of Christ was opposed to those who were concerned in this base act, and that enmity to the doctrine of the Trinity produced it. The story itself deserves also to be preserved as a memorable instance of the divine interposition of Providence.‡

Notwithstanding the clearest proofs of the innocence of Athanasius,

* Socrat., Hist. Eccles., lib. i., cap. 27; Theodoret., Hist. Eccles., lib. i., cap. 30; Sozom., Hist. Eccles., lib. ii., cap. 25.

† Socrat., Hist. Eccles., lib. i., cap. 29.

‡ Milner, History of the Church, vol. i., p. 532.

and that the whole course of his life was wholly opposed to such crimes as he stood charged with,* his enemies prevailed so far, that Commissioners were despatched into Egypt to examine the affairs of which he was accused. John, the Meletian Bishop, and the chief contriver of the plot, confessed his fault to the injured Athanasius, and craved his forgiveness. Arsenius also, we are told, renounced his former companions, and requested a reception into communion with the Alexandrian Bishop. Egypt, where the persecuted Prelate was best known, was faithful in its adhesion to him. The Commissioners arrived at Alexandria, and endeavoured to extort evidence against him by drawn swords, whips, clubs, and other engines of cruelty. The Clergy of that city solicited to be present that they might give evidence, but were refused. The Marætic Clergy took the same steps, but to no purpose. These delegated individuals returned with extorted evidence to Tyre, whence Athanasius, who saw no justice was to be shown, had fled. They passed sentence, and deposed him from his bishopric. Yet there were some in the Synod of Tyre who were willing to deal justly with the much-injured Prelate.† Paphnutius, who has been before mentioned, took Maximus, Bishop of Jerusalem, by the hand: "Let us begone," said he; "it becomes not those who have lost their limbs for religion, to go along with such pernicious company." But the majority were very differently disposed. Athanasius came to Constantinople, and desired justice from the Emperor,‡ and a fair trial. Constantine ordered the Bishops of the Synod to appear before him, and to give an account of what they had done. The greatest part of them returned home; but the ingenuity of Eusebius of Nicomedia was not exhausted, and,

* Theodoret mentions one of these customary charges of licentiousness, in which a woman of bad character accused Athanasius of violating her chastity. Athanasius was silent, while one of his friends, with assumed indignation, demanded, "Do you accuse *me* of this crime?" "Yes," replied the woman, supposing him to be Athanasius, of whom she was ignorant, "*you* were the violator of my chastity." (Theod., Hist. Eccles., lib. i., cap. 30.)

† Sozomen., Hist. Eccles., lib. ii., cap. 25.

‡ A commission of inquiry had been issued, who conducted themselves, according to the statements of the friends of Athanasius, with the utmost violence and partiality. On their report, the Bishop of the important city of Alexandria was deposed from his dignity. But Athanasius bowed not beneath the storm. As the Emperor rode through the city of Constantinople, he was arrested by the sudden appearance of a train of Ecclesiastics, in the midst of whom was Athanasius. The offended Emperor, with a look of silent contempt, urged his horse onward. "God," said the Prelate, with a loud voice, "shall judge between thee and me, since you thus espouse the cause of my calumniators. I demand only that my enemies be summoned, and my cause heard in the imperial presence." The Emperor admitted the justice of his petition. The accusers of Athanasius were commanded to appear in Constantinople. A new charge, on a subject skilfully chosen to awaken the jealousy of the Emperor, counteracted the influence which might have been obtained by the eloquence or the guiltlessness of Athanasius. It is remarkable, that an accusation of a very similar nature should have caused the capital punishment of the most distinguished among the heathen philosophic party, and the exile of the most eminent Christian Prelate. Constantinople entirely depended for the supply of corn upon foreign importation. One half of Africa, including Egypt, was assigned to the maintenance of the new capital, while the western division alone remained for Rome. At some period during the later years of Constantine, the adverse winds detained the Alexandrian fleet, and famine began to afflict the inhabitants of the city. The populace was in tumult; the Government looked anxiously for means to allay the dangerous ferment. (Milman.)

as he hesitated at no fraudulent manœuvre, he was ashamed of no villany: he, with a few of the Synod, went to Constantinople, and, waving the old accusations, brought forth one altogether new; namely, that Athanasius had threatened to stop the fleet that brought corn from Alexandria to Constantinople. Constantine was credulous enough to be moved by such a report: the machinations of the Arians were successful, honesty and good faith were at a fearful discount, and the Prelate of Alexandria was banished to Gaul. Constantinople was now the seat of contention; but Providence had provided a Bishop who was equal to the contest. This was Alexander of Constantinople, a man of eminent piety and integrity, whose character, at least, seems to have approached as near to that of a primitive Christian, as did that of any persons who distinguished themselves at this period. Eusebius of Nicomedia menaced him with deposition and exile, unless he consented to receive Arius into the church. On the one hand, the Prelate knew too well the power of the Arians, by what they had done already; and the Trinitarians were so far outmatched by them in subtlety and artifice, that, though victorious in argument in the face of the whole world, with the Council of Nice and an orthodox Emperor on their side, they yet were persecuted and oppressed, and their enemies prevailed at Court. But, on the other hand, it behoved not a Christian Bishop to consent to the admission of an artful sectarian, who could agree in form to the Nicene faith, and yet gradually insinuate his poisonous doctrines into the church. What were this but, in fact, to allow the wolf to enter the sheep-fold, and devour the flock? The mind of Alexander was directed aright in this affair. He spent several days and nights in prayer alone in his church. The faithful followed his example, and prayer was made by the church without ceasing, that God would interfere on this occasion. Controversies and the arts of logic were omitted; and they who believed that the Nicene faith was holy, and of most interest to the souls of men, sincerely committed their cause to God. Constantine, however, could not be prevailed upon to admit Arius into the church, unless he could be convinced of his orthodoxy. He sent for him, therefore, to the palace, and asked him plainly, whether he agreed to the Nicene decrees. The heresiarch, without hesitation, subscribed: the Emperor ordered him to swear; he assented to this also. "I follow," says Milner, from whom we at present quote, "the narrative of Socrates, one of the most candid and moderate historians, who tells us that he had heard, that Arius had under his arm a written paper of his real sentiments, and that he swore that he believed as he had written. Whether he used this equivocation or not, is far from being clear. But Socrates, who is careful to tell us that he heard this reported, assures us that he did swear in addition to his subscription, and that this he knew from the Emperor's epistles."* Constantine, whose scruples were now overcome, ordered Alexander to receive him into the church the next day. The good Bishop had given himself to fasting and prayer, and renewed his supplications that day with great fervour in the church, prostrate before

* Socrat., Hist. Eccles., lib. i., cap. 38.

the altar, and attended by Macarius only, who was a Presbyter belonging to Athanasius. He begged that if Arius were right, he himself might not live to see that day of contest; but, if the faith were true which he professed, that Arius, the author of all the evils, might suffer the punishment of his impiety. The next day seemed to be a triumphant one to the Arians.* The heads of the party paraded through the city with Arius in the midst, and drew the attention of all toward them. When they came nigh the forum of Constantine, a sudden terror, with a disorder of the intestines, seized Arius. In his urgent necessity, he requested to be directed to a place of retirement. Agreeably to the information he received, he hastened behind the forum, and there he poured forth his bowels with a vast effusion of blood. Such was the exit of Arius. The place of his death was memorable to posterity, and was shown in the times of Socrates.† The united testimony of ancient historians leaves no room to doubt of the fact. The reflections to be made upon it will vary, as men believe and are disposed. That it is usual with the Almighty to hear the prayers of his church, and to answer them remarkably on extraordinary occasions, will not be denied by those who reverence the word of God, and who remember the case of Hezekiah in the Old Testament, and of Peter in the New. That the danger of the church from heresy was particularly great at this time, will be equally admitted by all who believe that the Trinitarian doctrine includes within it whatever is most precious and interesting in the Gospel; that here, on one side, an appeal was made to God in his own appointed way, in faith, prayer, patience, and sincerity; while the other side dealt in falsehood, artifice, ambition, and worldly policy, is evident from the narrative. From these premises, a man who fears God will feel it his duty to believe that God interposed to comfort his church, and to confound its adversaries. We can see no method to avoid this conclusion. The translator of Mosheim seems put to a great difficulty, when he declares it extremely probable that

* Alexander firmly resisted the reception of Arius into the orthodox communion. Affairs were hastening to a crisis. The Arians, with the authority of the Emperor on their side, threatened to force their way into the church, and to compel the admission of their champion. The orthodox, the weaker party, had recourse to prayer. The Arians already raised the voice of triumph. While Alexander was prostrate at the altar, Arius was borne through the wondering city in a kind of ovation, surrounded by his friends, and welcomed with loud acclamations by his own party. As he passed the porphyry column, he was forced to retire into a house, to relieve his natural necessities. His return was anxiously expected, but in vain: he was found dead, as his antagonists declared: his bowels had burst out, and thus the church was saved from the machinations of the obstinate heretic. We cannot wonder that at such period of excitement the orthodox, in that well-timed incident, recognised a direct providential interference in their favour. It was ascribed to the prevailing prayers of Alexander and his Clergy. (Milman.)

† Socrates tells us, that some time after a rich Arian bought the place, changed its form, and built there a house, that the event might gradually sink into oblivion. It must not be denied, however, that Arius also took pains to propagate his sentiments by methods more honourable than those of duplicity and fraud, in which he was so eminently versed. His historian, Philostorgius, of whom some fragments remain, assures us, that he composed songs for sailors, millers, and travellers, tending to support his heresy. "Arium cum ab Ecclesiâ recessisset, scripsisse cantica nautica, et molaria, et viatoria; aliaque composita in cantus redegisse quos cuique convenire existimabat, ut ita cantus voluptate ad suam homines imperitissimos impietatem furtim raperet." (Philostorg., Hist. Eccles., lib. ii., cap. 2, Genev., 4to., 1643; Sozom., Hist. Eccles., lib. vi., cap. 30.)

he was poisoned by his enemies. A more absurd and unwarranted imagination never entered into the heart of man. And surely such things ought not to have been said, without some proof or probable circumstance. Certain it is that the fear of God rested with the Trinitarians, though it was at too low an ebb among all parties. Among these, however, nothing like such wickedness appears, while the Arians evidently seem to have been given up to the greatest villanies and profligacy. Great was the joy of the aged Bishop to find that God had not forsaken his church.*

The history of the church of Christ at this period becomes highly monitory. The imperial enactments were known by three names. They were severally called Epistles or Rescripts, Decrees, and Edicts. The Epistles, or Rescripts, of the Emperors, were laws enacted at the instance of the parties concerned. They were the answers of the Emperor to those who applied to him for his judgment and decision, both at home and from the provinces. The power, therefore, which Constantine possessed, was even greater than that of the Cæsars, his predecessors. The Canons of the Council of Nice, which had been summoned in consequence of the letters of Alexander to Constantine, became laws by the rescript of the Emperor. When the Council of Constantinople was concluded, the Fathers wrote to the Emperor Theodosius, and petitioned that the decisions of the Council might be confirmed by his pious edict.† The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Ephesus were confirmed by the same power. The Decrees of the Council of Chalcedon also became laws by the rescript of the Emperor Marcian, written to the Prefect Palladius.‡ The Fathers of the fifth General Council petitioned Justinian to confirm and establish their Canons into a law. Justinian not only did so, but expressly commanded that the Canons of the first four General Councils should have the force of law throughout the empire. When the power of the Emperors began to yield to that of the Church of Rome, the Bishops of Rome followed the example of the Emperors. The Canons of the various Councils, whether General or Provincial, as well as the writings of the Fathers, were received with universal deference; and when ecclesiastical controversies could be decided by referring to them, their authority was conclusive. When, however, this could not be done, the parties interested in the several points under discussion made application, in various instances, to the Bishops of Rome, who returned answers in the same manner as the Emperors had done; and such epistles had the force of law over those who were subjected to the authority of the Pontiffs, and were called rescripts and decretal epistles. The laws of the Church of Rome were soon so framed, as to correspond with the general enactments of the temporal power, and they constituted the decrees, or, as they were more commonly called, from the Latin name of the seal appended to the

* Milner, History of the Church, vol. i., p. 535.

† "Edictio prælatis tuæ confirmatur Synodi sententia." (Godolphin, Repertorium Canonicum, Introduct., p. 3.)

‡ "Ea quæ de Christianâ fide, a sacerdotibus qui Chalcedone convenerunt, per nostra præcepta statuta sunt." (Godolphin, ut supra.)

parchment on which they were written, the Bulls of the Bishop of Rome. The imperial constitutions, by whatever name they were called, whether epistles, or decrees, or edicts, possessed the force of law throughout the empire.* The whole jurisdiction over the churches gradually fell into the hands of the Bishop of Rome, till the *lex Pontificalis* became the only law to the churches. The description of the imperial law was applicable to the pontifical law. The will of the Prince was sole rule to the people :† the will of the Pontiff became the sole rule to the church. In this way was persecution, or the infliction of extreme punishment for the holding of opinion, made a law to the Christian church. Not only were the opinions of Arius anathematized by the Council,—thus far they were right in their condemnation ; not only was he deposed from his office,—in thus inflicting punishment they did not exceed their authority and power ; but the heresiarch was banished, and the law which made the possession of his books by an inquirer into the controversy a capital offence, was promulgated by the Emperor's letters to the whole empire. Neither was one epistle only written to the churches and the people ; repeated rescripts were published, that none might plead ignorance of the painful fact, that heresy was a civil crime, and that heretics were traitors and criminals.‡ Such efforts to extend the knowledge of the penalties decreed against a new offence among the people of the empire, who had long been accustomed to consider the punishment of torture and death due to those who would not profess the religion of the ruler, must have been attended with great effect.§

From this period until the close of this century, intolerance, in its rudest and most savage forms, was rampant, in which all parties indulged, some in a greater and others in a less degree. The Rev. George Townsend has entered at large into a consideration of the internal state of the church at this period ; and the conclusion at which he has arrived we will lay before our readers. The Christian who is jealous for the honour of his religion, the philosopher who desires to think favourably of human nature, the student of history who wishes to be pleased with the discovery of the facts which prove the flowing, rather than the ebbing, tide of human advancement, are alike pained with the events which occurred during the period between the Council of Nice and the establishment of the atrocious codes of law which still further multiplied the crimes and the sorrows of the people. We may pass by the long story without reluctance, though it is sometimes made interesting by the development of the virtues of firmness, zeal, and undoubted attachment to principle and truth. It is sufficient to say, that the picture which has been already

* They were also called "pragmaticæ sanctiones, orationes, annotationes," &c. (See Butler.)

† Ulpian, writing on the *lex regia*, observes: "Quod principi placuit, legis habet vigorem : utpote cum lege regia, quæ de imperio ejus lata est, populus ei, et in eum, omne suum imperium et potestatem conferat." (Hooke, Roman History. Note to the last paragraph of the last volume.)

‡ The Greek of the original decree is given by the historian Socrates, and is preserved by Gelasius, in his View of the Acts and Monuments of the Council of Nice, in the second volume of Labbe's Concilia.

§ Townsend, Civil and Ecclesiastical History, vol. i., p. 299.

sketched of the state of the Christian world, from the accession of Constantine A.D. 306 to his death A.D. 336, retained all its colours with unfading freshness. The same contest between the churches, their Bishops, and the people, agitated the provinces, exasperated the Sovereigns, delighted the scoffer, and debased Christianity. Athanasius, after many banishments, and as many returns to his see, died in peace in the forty-sixth or forty-eighth year of his episcopate. Other Councils were called at Alexandria and Rome, in Milan, in Sardica, (in which a new power was said to have been conferred on the Bishops * of Rome, of determining the justice of the decisions of Provincial Councils by sending Legates to inquire into the matters discussed,) at Alexandria and Paris, in Italy and at Rome, as well as at Beziers in France, afterwards so fatally distinguished in the war of the Albigenses, and in other places, in favour of the Homoousian Confession. Three Councils of an opposite tendency were summoned at Antioch, in all of which new creeds, or confessions of faith, were tendered by the Bishops to the assembly, professing the general doctrine of the Council of Nice; only the disputed word, "homoousian," was omitted. Other Councils were summoned, also, in various parts of the empire against the disputed word: at Arles, where the Legates of the Bishop of Rome were unfortunately induced to subscribe to an anti-homoousian confession; at Milan, where, nine years before, the Nicene Confession had been adopted; at Antioch, Ancyra, and repeatedly at Sirmium; at Ariminum, where the Council commenced by sanctioning the Nicene, and ended by subscribing the Eusebian, Creed; and at many other places also, which need not now be recapitulated: in all of which the will of Arian Emperors was the prevailing motive with the majority of the Bishops of the church to condemn the Creed of Nice, and adopt the conclusions of its opponents. The world saw with astonishment Synod against Synod in the smaller, and Council against Council in the larger, provinces; †

* We adopt the expression, "was said to have been conferred," because the canons of the Council are questionable. They were quoted as those of Nice and rejected. They are not reckoned among the canons of the universal church received at Chalcedon.

† We must not, however, suppose that the Councils did no more than anathematize real or supposed heretics: they sometimes passed useful canons, and enacted good laws. The Council of Gangra, for instance, concluded with words similar to the following:—"We ordain these things not to exclude those who would, according to the advices of the holy Scripture, exercise themselves in the church by these practices of continence and piety; but against those who use these kinds of austerities as a pretence to satisfy their ambition, who despise those who lead an ordinary life, and who introduce innovation contrary to Scripture, and the ecclesiastical law. We admire virginity when it is accompanied with humility; we praise abstinence which is joined with piety and prudence; we respect that retirement which is made with humility; but we also honour marriage. We do not blame riches, when they are in the hands of persons just and munificent. We esteem those who clothe themselves modestly, without pride and affectation; and we abhor uncivil and voluptuous apparel. We have a reverence for churches; and we approve the assemblies which are there made as holy and useful. We do not confine piety to houses; we honour all places built to the name of God. We approve the assemblies which are kept in the church for the public good. We praise the largesses which the faithful give to the church to be distributed among the poor. In a word, we wish and desire that these things may be observed in the church, which we have learnt from the Scripture, and the tradition of the Apostles." (Du Pin.) We have referred to the Council of Gangra; it was held some time between the years 325 and 380. Dom. Cellier would assign it to a year subsequent to 379, in which Basil died, because that Father, who in various places speaks of the excesses of Eusta-

creed opposed to creed, and Bishops anathematizing Bishops, while both parties appealed to the civil power to execute the decrees of condemnation, and punish their adversaries with exile, imprisonment, or death. Here, as in Alexandria, the troops of the Emperor were required by the Arian Gregory to take possession of the church, which the people burnt in revenge after Athanasius had escaped; there, as in Antioch, Macedonius, the Arian, expels Paulus, the Nicenist favourite of the people, and takes possession of the episcopal chair amidst the slaughter of more than three thousand men. At one time the Emperor of the East refuses to receive Athanasius, who, after an appeal to Rome, had been recommended to be re-instated in his see; and his brother Emperor in the West compels the restoration of a Christian Bishop by threatening open war. Constantius, the Emperor to whom we are alluding, to avoid the fatal alternative, restores Athanasius to his see. He requests only that one church be granted to the Arians. The Bishop requests, in return, that one church be granted to those of his own faith in those districts where the Arians possessed authority. The request of the Bishop, and the petition of the Sovereign, such was the intolerance of the age, were alike refused. Cruelty was committed by both parties; but the Arians, like all who are most in the wrong, were more severe, and fierce, and unrelenting than their opponents, and committed atrocities

thius of Sebaste, says nothing at all about his having been condemned in this Council; whence Cellier infers that it was not holden till after his death. And, further, it appears that Peter the brother of Basil occupied the see of Sebaste, in Armenia, in 380, from which he thinks that he was elected in the place of Eustathius, deposed in this Council, about the end of the year 380. But it is necessary to prove that the Eustathius condemned in this Council was the same with Eustathius of Sebaste of whom Basil speaks. Socrates and Sozomen, the most ancient ecclesiastical historians, plainly assert that it was so; and, moreover, what they say of Eustathius and his doctrine agrees exactly with what we read in the synodal letter of Gangra. The letter does not, indeed, distinctly term him Bishop of Sebaste, but it indirectly accuses him of having spread his errors in Armenia, since it is addressed to the Bishops of that country. Added to the testimony of Socrates and Sozomen, we have that of Basil, who relates that the disciples of Eustathius of Sebaste rendered an ascetic life odious by their hypocrisy and false piety. This agrees with the idea that the canons of Gangra give us of the conduct of Eustathius and his followers therein condemned. There can, then, be little doubt that the Eustathius of the Council is identical with Eustathius of Sebaste. And if this be so, the most probable date of the Council of Gangra is, perhaps, just before, if not after, the death of Basil, that is, about 379. Valens reigned from 364 to 378. If, however, as Pagi asserts, Hosius of Cordova was present in the Council, so late a date as 380 cannot be assigned to it. Hosius died in 357; but there is sufficient reason to doubt his presence. (See note, Baronii Annales Histor. Eccles., A.D. 319.) About 324 is the date given by Labbe and Cossart, Collection of Councils. Not later than 340, according to Johnson's Clergyman's Vade Mecum, vol. ii., p. 76. Eustathius, toward the end of his life, originated the notion, that it is unlawful to marry, and to eat certain meats. He separated several married persons; advised those who disliked the public offices of the church to communicate at home; himself wore, and made his followers also wear, an extraordinary dress; obliged women to cut off their hair; said that it was quite unnecessary to keep the prescribed fasts of the church, and ordered his followers, on the contrary, to fast on Sundays; and maintained that they should avoid, as the greatest profanation, the communion and the benediction of a married Priest living with his wife. In order to arrest the course of these dangerous errors, an assembly of Bishops was held at Gangra, the metropolis of Paphlagonia, in which twenty-one canons were published, in opposition to the error of Eustathius and his followers. Fifteen Bishops subscribed them, and addressed them, together with a synodal letter, containing briefly the causes which led to the assembling of the Council, to the Bishops of Armenia. (Landon's Councils.)

which were only equalled in those sad ages of which we have yet to speak. Hosius of Cordova, the President of the Council of Nice, though nearly a hundred years old, was beaten with clubs till he Arianized. The cities and provinces were stained with blood, and disgust alone can be excited by the tales of mutual and unsparing vengeance.* Valentinian, in the West, retained the Nicene faith, and was certainly less guilty than his brother ruler. Though a man of most cruel disposition,† he showed toleration to the Christians who differed from him. Valens, in the East, adhered to the Arian heresy, and excelled even the cruelty of the age. Some he drowned in the Orontes and other rivers, drowning being the most common of his inflictions. Eighty deputies of the Nicene faith, from Nicomedia, were burnt alive in a vessel which he ordered to be deserted by the mariners. This man seemed mad with fury. Being informed by a fortune-teller that the name of his successor would begin with the letter *theta*, he destroyed as many as possible whose names commenced in that manner, among whom Theodosiolus, a Spaniard of equal honour and courage, is more particularly mentioned by the historian. The spirit of the age, in short, is best expressed by the language of Nestorius to the Emperor of the day, some time after the death of Valens :—" Clear the world from heretics, O Emperor ! and I will give you heaven. Aid me to extirpate heretics, I will aid thee in conquering the Persian enemy." Difference of opinion was the cause, hatred and persecution were the effect. Misery in private life, and weakness of the empire in public affairs, were the inevitable and uniform consequences.

In prosecuting our researches, we shall often have occasion to stumble on what has been designated the Apostolical Canons or Constitutions, and the Canons of the Universal Church. The Apostolic Constitutions, consisting of eight books, and the Codex, containing eighty-five canons, known by the title of the Canons of the Apostles,‡ are among the records of this class. Athanasius and Epiphanius frequently allude to them in their writings. It must, however, be stated, that these quotations are very probably the result of some interpolators, inasmuch as it is generally admitted, that the eighth book of these canons has been added since the days of Epiphanius. The Fathers of the three first centuries are as silent as the grave concerning them. Many customs are referred to in them, which had no existence until a much later date than that which it is presumed saw their birth : they were utterly unknown as the general laws of the

* See Gibbon, Decline and Fall, chap. xxi., in which he dwells particularly on the cruelties of the Arians.

† Ibid., chap. xxv.

‡ Or Apostolical Constitutions : they were a collection of regulations attributed to the Apostles, and supposed to have been collected by Clement, whose name they likewise bear. It is the general opinion, however, that they are spurious, and that Clement had no hand in them. They appeared first in the fourth century, but have been much changed and corrupted since. There are so many things in them different from, and even contrary to, the genius and design of the New-Testament writers, that no wise man would believe, without the most convincing and irresistible proof, that both could come from the same hand. They were published both in Greek and English, by William Whiston, who contended vehemently for their divine authority. (Henderson.)

church at that early period which their title imports: it is, however, desirable, since they have been appealed to in more recent times, and particularly in support of some of the arbitrary and tyrannical pretensions of the Church of Rome, that we arrive at a tangible opinion respecting their authority and value. The first official notice of them appears to have taken place at the second Council of Constantinople. Several of these canons are of an early date, and others are far less ancient. Doubtless every distinct see, and every metropolitan church, would register every rule that was to be observed in the internal administration of its affairs; these records would, in process of time, include the enactments of minor Synods, and would be preserved as a successive register of precepts and laws enacted from the foundation of each bishopric. Certain Bishops, also, of the most ancient diocesses, might agree among themselves to order selections or abstracts of the earliest and most important rules, in order to establish a uniformity of discipline in their respective jurisdictions; copies of which having in time multiplied, became acknowledged as canons, though few of them might have resulted from the greater Councils. Had they been submitted for acceptance and ratification to any public assembly of the Bishops and Elders of the church, there would not have been much ambiguity respecting them. It is still difficult to trace the several portions of the code to any particular date, or to discover any satisfactory authority under which they may have been at first framed. Much may be gathered respecting the history of ecclesiastical customs and usages from the Constitutiones et Canones Apostolicæ, during the years from 193 to 325. They are valuable reference for testimony and evidence; but for authority they certainly possess no weight.

Another blow was struck about this time, from which Paganism did never recover; and this was, the erection of another city, which was intended to rival even Rome, and marks one of the great periods of change in the annals of the world. Both its immediate and its remoter connexion with the history of Christianity are among those results which contributed to its influence on the destinies of mankind. The removal of the seat of empire from Rome might, indeed, at first appear to strengthen the decaying cause of Paganism.* The Senate became the sanctuary, the aristocracy of Rome, in gene-

* Of the churches erected by Constantine in the new city, one was dedicated to Sophia, (the supreme Wisdom,) the other to Eirene (Peace). A philosophic Pagan might have admitted the propriety of dedicating temples to each of these abstract names. The consecrating to individual saints was of a later period. The ancient temple of Peace, which afterwards formed part of the Santa Sophia, was appropriately transformed into a Christian church. The church of the Twelve Apostles appears, from Eusebius, to have been built in the last year of his reign and of his life, as a burial-place for himself and his family. "This building he carried to a vast height, and brilliantly decorated, by encasing it, from the foundation to the roof, with marble slabs of various colours. He also formed the inner-roof of finely fretted work, and overlaid it throughout with gold. The external covering, which protected the building from the weather, was of brass, instead of tiles; and this, too, was splendidly and profusely adorned with gold, and reflected the sun's rays with a brilliancy which dazzled the distant beholder. The dome was entirely encompassed by a finely-carved tracery wrought in brass and gold." (Euseb., De Vita Const., lib. iv., cap. 58.) Sozomen says, that Constantine embellished the city.

ral, the unshaken adherents of the ancient religion. But its more remote and eventual circumstances were favourable to the consolidation and energy of Christianity in the West. The absence of a secular competitor allowed the Papal power to grow, and to develope its secret strength. By the side of the imperial authority, perpetually contrasted with the pomp and majesty of the throne, constantly repressed in its slow but steady advancement to supremacy, or obliged to contest every point with a domestic antagonist, the Pope would hardly have gained more political importance than the Patriarch of Constantinople. In any other city the Bishop of Rome would in vain have asserted his descent from the Apostle Peter: the long habit of connecting together the name of Rome with supreme dominion, silently co-operated in establishing the spiritual despotism of the Papal See. But in its more immediate influence, the rise of Constantinople was favourable to the progress of Christianity. It removed the seat of government from the presence of those awful temples, to which ages of glory had attached an inalienable sanctity, and with which the piety of all the greater days of the republic had associated the supreme dominion and the majesty of Rome. It broke the last link which combined the pontifical and the imperial character. The Emperor of Constantinople, even if he had remained Pagan, would have lost that power which was obtained over men's minds by his appearing in the chief place in all the religious pomps and processions, some of which were as old as Rome itself. The Senate, and even the people, might be transferred to the new city: the deities of Rome clung to their native home, and would have refused to abandon their ancient seats of honour and worship.*

The prospect of beauty, of safety, and of wealth, united in a single spot, was sufficient to justify the choice of Constantine. But as some decent mixture of prodigy and fable has, in every age, been supposed to reflect a becoming majesty on the origin of great cities, the Emperor was desirous of ascribing his resolution, not so much to the uncertain counsels of human policy, as to the infallible and eternal decrees of divine wisdom. In one of his laws he has been careful to instruct posterity, that, in obedience to the commands of God, he laid the everlasting foundations of Constantinople; and though he has not condescended to relate in what manner the celestial inspiration was communicated to his mind, the defect of his modest silence has been liberally supplied by the ingenuity of succeeding writers, who describe the nocturnal vision which appeared to the fancy of Constantine, as he slept within the walls of Byzantium. The tutelar genius of the city, a venerable matron sinking under the weight of years and infirmities, was suddenly transformed into a blooming maid, whom his own hand adorned with all the symbols of imperial greatness.†

* Milman, History of Christianity, vol. ii., p. 401.

† The Greeks, Theophanes, Cedrenus, and the author of the Alexandrian Chronicle, confine themselves to vague and general expressions. For a more particular account of the vision we are obliged to have recourse to such Latin writers as William of Malmsbury. Constantinople was first called Byzantium; which name is still preserved by the imperial money called Bezants. Aldhelm, in his book on Virginity, (Aldhelmi, Opera, Occid. Saxon. Episc. De Laudib. Virginitat., cap. xii., Biblioth. Pat. et Vet.,

The Monarch awoke, interpreted the auspicious omen, and obeyed, without hesitation, the will of Heaven. The day which gave birth to a city or colony was celebrated by the Romans with such ceremonies as had been ordained by a generous superstition;* and though Constantine might omit some rites which savoured too strongly of their pagan origin, yet he was anxious to leave a deep impression of hope and respect on the minds of the spectators. On foot, with a lance in his hand, the Emperor himself led the solemn procession; and directed the line which was traced as the boundary of the destined capital, till the growing circumference was observed with astonishment by the assistants, who at length ventured to observe that he had already exceeded the most ample measure of a great city. "I shall still advance," replied Constantine, "till He, the invisible guide who marches before me, thinks proper to stop." Without presuming to investigate the nature or motives of this extraordinary conductor, we shall briefly refer to the extent and limits of the projected city. From the eastern promontory to the golden gate, the extreme length of Constantinople was about three Roman miles; the circumference measured between ten and eleven, and the surface might be computed as equal to about two thousand English acres. It is impossible to justify the vain and credulous exaggerations of modern travellers who have sometimes stretched the limits of Constantinople over the adjacent villages of the European and even of the Asiatic coast. But the suburbs of Pera and Galata, though situate beyond the harbour, may deserve to be considered as a part of the city; and this addition may perhaps authorize the measure of a Byzantine historian, who assigns sixteen Greek (about fourteen Roman) miles for the circumference of his native city. Such an extent may not seem unworthy

tom. iii., col. 290, fol., Paris, 1624,) relates that it changed its appellation by divine suggestion. His words are as follow: "As Constantine was sleeping in this city, he imagined that there stood before him an old woman, whose forehead was furrowed with age; but that, presently, clad in an imperial robe, she became transformed into a beautiful girl, and so fascinated his eyes by the elegance of her youthful charms, that he could not refrain from kissing her; that Helena, his mother, being present, then said, 'She shall be yours for ever; nor shall she die, till the end of time.' The solution of this dream, when he awoke, the Emperor extorted from heaven by fasting and almsgiving. And, behold, within eight days, being cast into a deep sleep, he thought he saw Pope Silvester, who died some little time before, regarding his convert with complacency, and saying, 'You have acted with your customary prudence in waiting for a solution, from God, of that enigma which was beyond the comprehension of man. The old woman you saw is this city, worn down by age, whose time-struck walls, menacing approaching ruin, require a restorer. But you, renewing its walls and its affluence, shall signalize it also with your name; and here shall the imperial progeny reign for ever. You shall not, however, lay the foundations at your own pleasure; but, mounting the horse on which, when in the novitiate of your faith, you rode round the churches of the Apostles at Rome, you shall give him the rein, and liberty to go whither he please; you shall have too, in your hand, your royal spear, whose point shall describe the circuit of the wall on the ground. You will be regulated, therefore, in what manner to dispose the foundations of the wall by the track of the spear on the earth.' The Emperor eagerly obeyed the vision, and built a city equal to Rome; alleging that the Emperor ought not to reign in Rome, where the martyred Apostles, from the time of Christ, held dominion." (William of Malmsbury, Chronicle.)

* Among other ceremonies, a large hole, which had been dug for that purpose, was filled up with handfuls of earth, which each of the settlers brought from the place of his birth, and thus adopted his new country.

of an imperial residence. Yet Constantinople must yield to Babylon and Thebes, to ancient Rome, to London, and even to Paris.*

In several towns there was a public building, termed the Basilica, or Hall of Justice,† which was singularly adapted for the Christian worship. This was a large chamber, of an oblong form, with a plain flat exterior wall. The pillars which in the temples were without, stood within the Basilica; and the porch, or that which in the temple was an outward portico, was contained within the Basilica.‡ This hall was thus divided by two rows of columns into a central avenue, with two side-aisles. The outward wall was easily pierced for windows, without damaging the symmetry or order of the architecture. In the one the male, in the other the female, appellants to justice waited their turn.§ The three longitudinal avenues were crossed by one in a tranverse direction, elevated a few steps, and occupied by the Advocates, Notaries, and others employed in the public business. At the further end, opposite to the central avenue, the building swelled out in a semicircular recess with a ceiling rounded off: it was called *absis* in the Greek, and in Latin, *tribunal*. Here sate the Magistrate with his Assessors, and hence courts of justice were called *tribunals*. The arrangement of this building coincided with remarkable propriety with the distribution of a Christian congregation.‖ The sexes retained their separate places in the aisles. The central avenue became the nave, so called from the fanciful analogy of the church to the ship of Peter. The transept, the βημα, or "choros," was occupied by the inferior Clergy, and the singers. The Bishop took the throne of the Magistrate, and the superior Clergy ranged on each side, on the seats of the Assessors. Before the throne of the Bishop, either within or on the verge of the recess, stood the altar. This was divided from the nave by the *cancelli*, or "bars," from whence hung curtains, which, during the celebration of the communion, separated the participants from the rest of the congregation. By the consecration of these basilicas to the purposes of Christian worship, and the gradual erection of large churches in many of the Eastern cities, Christianity began to assume an outward form and dignity commensurate with its moral influence, and in its imposing

* Gibbon, Decline and Fall, chap. xvii., vol. iii., p. 17, 8vo. edit.

† Basilica is properly a royal palace; but in the first centuries of Rome the basilicas were splendid public buildings, of an oblong shape, and four-cornered, and commonly adorned with Corinthian columns and statues, where the citizens collected to consult for their common welfare, transact mercantile business, and hear the young orators exercise themselves in declamation. Some of them having been given by Constantine to the Roman Christians for their worship, the first buildings appropriated to this purpose obtained the name of *basilica*; and afterwards, when new churches were built, the shape of the ancient *basilica* was retained. (Henderson.)

‡ "Le basilique fut l'édifice des anciens, qui convint à la célébration de ses mystères. La vaste capacité de son intérieur, les divisions de son place, les grandes ouvertures, qui introduisient de toutes parts la lumière dans son enceinte, le tribunal qui devint la place des célébrans, et du chœur, tout se trouva en rapport avec les pratiques du nouveau culte." (Q. de Quincy, p. 173.)

§ According to Bingham, the women occupied galleries in each aisle above the men. This sort of separation may have been borrowed from the synagogue: probably the practice was not uniform.

‖ Some few churches were of an octagonal form; some in that of a cross.

magnitude, if not in the grace and magnificence of its architecture, it not only rivalled the temples of antiquity, but led to a fearful aberration from the path of piety and truth, until an awful Ichabod was inscribed upon the pulpit and the pew, "The glory of the Lord is departed!"

In taking a review of the character and conduct of Constantine, we must admit that he was animated throughout these perplexing dissensions, not by any private or sectarian animosity against the Arian party, but by a sincere desire to promote the peace of the church. It was his object to correct and chastise the perversity of the heretics, and thus to force them into communion with the great body of his Christian subjects; but he had no wish for their extermination.* And as soon as he discovered that his first severities were ineffectual; that the Arians, under the episcopal guidance of Eusebius† of Nicomedia, lost little strength in Asia, and even maintained the contest in Alexandria itself; and that they were not without support in his own court and household; he perceived the inutility of his measures, and chose rather to retrace the steps which he had taken, than to advance more deeply into the paths of persecution. He therefore recalled Eusebius in the year 330; and six years afterwards Arius himself, having presented to the Emperor a modified profession of faith, was released from the sentence of banishment.‡ Arius, as we have seen, did not long survive his restoration, and, to adopt the language of a writer by no means friendly to the heresiarch, "he made use of the advantages he was master of to gain the people; for it is certain that he had a great many talents, which rendered him capable of nicely insinuating himself into their good opinion and affections. He was tall of stature, and of a very becoming make, grave and serious in his carriage, with a certain air of severity in his looks, which made him pass for a man of great virtue and austerity of life. Yet this severity did not discourage those who accosted him, because it was softened by an extraordinary delicacy in his features that gave lustre to his whole person, and had something in it so sweet and engaging, as was not easily to be resisted. His garb was modest, but withal neat, and such as was usually worn by those who were not men of quality, as well as learning. His manner of receiving people was very courteous, and very ingratiating, through his agreeable way of entertaining those who came to him upon any occasion. In short, notwithstanding his

* In a formal Edict, addressed to the Bishops and people, Constantine compares the blindness of Arius to that of Porphyry, and commands his followers to be designated by the ignominious name of Porphyrians. He then proceeds to consign the books of Arius to the flames, nearly in the following terms:—"If any man be found to have concealed a copy of those books, and not to have instantly produced it, and thrown it into the fire, he shall be put to death. The moment he is convicted of this he shall be subjected to capital punishment. The Lord continue to preserve you." (Socrates, Hist. Eccles.)

† Philostorgius, the Arian historian, attributes miracles to this Eusebius; and Athanasius seems to consider him rather as the master, than the disciple, of Arius. (See Tillemont, Sur les Ariens, art. vi.)

‡ It is another, perhaps a more probable, opinion, that Eusebius was recalled in 328, and Arius even sooner; but that the Emperor did not invite Arius to Constantinople until 336. (Mosh., Eccles. Hist., cent. iv., p. ii., c. 5.) See also Tillemont, loc. cit., who dates the real rancour of the contest from the refusal of Athanasius still to communicate with his adversary.

mighty seriousness, and the severity and strictness of his mien, he perfectly well understood how to soothe and flatter, with all imaginable wit and address, those whom he had a mind to bring over to his opinion, and engage in his party." But the envy that proceeds from ambition, is a wild beast, which benefits can never tame: they, being so many marks of that greatness which is already insupportable in him that bestows them, only add to the uneasiness of that furious passion, and at the same time afford it more power to spread its venom, and to do mischief. Thus it was with Arius, of which numerous opportunities were forthcoming.*

Three Greek writers, Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret, take up the annals of the church about the time of its establishment by Constantine, nearly where the history of Eusebius terminates, and carry them on as far as the reign of Theodosius the Younger, through the space of about one hundred and twenty years. SOCRATES† was a native of Constantinople; he was carefully instructed in grammar and rhetoric, and presently assumed the profession of a scholastic or advocate. Much time, however, and very considerable diligence, he directed to the compilation of his historical materials, and no scanty judgment is shown in their arrangement and composition. The Epistles of Bishops, the Acts of Councils, and the works of preceding or contemporary Ecclesiastics, are consulted with care, and seemingly cited with fidelity; and the principal events are chronologically distinguished by Olympiads, or Consulates. His impartiality is so strikingly displayed, as to make his orthodoxy questionable to Baronius, the celebrated Roman Catholic historian; but Valesius, in his Life, has clearly shown that there is no reason for such suspicion. We may mention another principle which he has followed, which, in the mind of Baronius, may have tended to confirm the notion of his heterodoxy: he is invariably adverse to every form of persecution on account of religious opinions; and we call it persecution to offer any description of molestation to those who are quiet. Some credulity respecting miraculous stories is his principal failing. HERMIAS SOZOMEN‡ was also an Advocate, resident at Constantinople; but he

* Maimbourg, History of Arianism, book i., vol. i., 4to., London, 1728.

† He flourished about the middle of the fifth century, was born at Constantinople in the reign of Theodosius, and studied grammar under Helladius and Ammonius, who, having fled from Alexandria to Constantinople, had opened a school there; and, after he had finished his studies, he for some time professed the law, and pleaded at the bar, whence he obtained the name of Scholasticus. In the decline of life he undertook to write the history of the church, which is completed, as far as it goes, with much judgment and exactness. He has been accused of being a Novatian, and it cannot be denied that he speaks well of that sect; yet, as Valesius has proved, he was not one of them, but adhered to the church, while he represents them as separated from it. His history has been translated into Latin, and published in Greek and Latin by Valesius, together with Eusebius and the other ecclesiastical historians, and re-published, with additional notes, by Reading, London, 1720, 3 vols., fol.

‡ An ecclesiastical historian of the fifth century, was born of a good family at Bethelia in Palestine, and studied the law at Berytus. He then went to Constantinople, and became a pleader. Afterwards he applied himself to the writing of ecclesiastical history; and he first drew up a compendium of it in two books, from the ascension of Christ to the year 323; but this is lost. He then continued his history in a more circumstantial and close manner to the year 439; and this part, which is in nine books, is extant.

was a native of Palestine, born near Gaza, and was educated in a monastery in that country. In his writings we perceive a great ardour for the monastic life, and a concomitant tendency to superstitious extravagance. Superior in style to his contemporary, he is below him in judgment and discrimination; still his work contains much valuable matter, though some of it was certainly borrowed from that of Socrates, which seems to have been published somewhat earlier. THEODORET,* like Sozomen, received a monastic education; but he entered into the ecclesiastical profession, and became Bishop of Cyrus, in Syria. He was remarkable not only for his learning and piety, but for his absolute and voluntary poverty. "I was ordained Bishop against my will; for twenty-five years," says he, in an Epistle still extant: "I have so lived in that station, as never to be at variance, never to prosecute any one at law, or to be prosecuted. The same I can say of all the pious Clergy who are under my inspection, none of whom was ever seen in any court of justice. Neither I nor my domestics ever received the smallest present from any person, not even a loaf, nor an egg. My patrimony I gave long ago to the poor, and I have made no new acquisitions. I have neither house, nor land, nor money, nor a sepulchre where my friends may lay my body when I die. I am possessed of nothing save the poor raiment which I wear." As a writer, however, he is inferior to his two fellow-labourers, both in judgment and in moderation; he is more violent against schism and heresy, more bigoted, and more absurdly credulous. Yet he did not himself escape the charge of heresy; and was certainly attached to the party, probably to the opinions, of the Nestorians. His style is pronounced by Photius to be clear and lofty, without redundancy. To this list we may venture to regret that we cannot add the name of Philostorgius.† This writer, as we have observed, was an Arian; his history extended from the year 300 to 425, and he had witnessed much of what he described. But of his works nothing remains but an epitome by Photius, and some fragments. Photius assures us, that he betrayed great partiality for the sect to which he belonged, and this indeed appears to have been so; yet even such a narrative we would willingly confront with the probable misrepresentations of his adversaries. We have also referred to

It is dedicated to Theodosius II. "His style is more florid and elegant," says Jortin, in his Ecclesiastical Remarks, "than that of Socrates; but he is by no means so judicious an author."

* His Ecclesiastical History, in five books, is a kind of supplement to those of Socrates and Sozomen, after which it was written. It begins where that of Eusebius ends; namely, at the rise of Arianism, in 322 or 323; and it terminates in 428.

† Philostorgius was born at a village in Cappadocia about 368, and studied at Constantinople. He wrote an Ecclesiastical History, in twelve books, containing the history of affairs from the commencement of the Arian controversy, or about the year 300, to the year 425, when it was published. The work is lost. But in the Codex of Photius large extracts from it are preserved; which were first published at Geneva by James Godfrey, in the original Greek, accompanied with a Latin version, notes, and dissertations, 1643, 4to. In 1673 Henry de Valois, having collated the original with different manuscripts, corrected the text, and gave a new translation of the whole, published those extracts at Paris, together with the Ecclesiastical Histories of Eusebius, Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoret, &c., in 3 vols. fol.; followed by a supplement of additional fragments from Suidas and other authors. This edition was reprinted at Cambridge, in 1720, by William Reading, in 3 vols. fol., with additional notes and illustrations.

the authorities of Epiphanius, Hilary, Rufinus, and Sulpicius Severus, but have been very sparing in our use of them. Epiphanius was bred a Monk, and became Bishop of Salamis, in Cyprus.* He was the author of a voluminous book against all the heresies which had hitherto arisen. But his work is disfigured by so many marks of levity and ignorance, that we can follow him with no general confidence. Hilary was Bishop of Poitiers, for the most part a copyist of Tertullian and Origen, but celebrated for "Twelve Books concerning the Trinity," written against the Arians. Rufinus was a Presbyter of Aquileia, a translator, and not always a faithful one, of Origen and other Greek writers. He was engaged in a violent contest with Jerome, and was assailed by the virulence of that intemperate writer; and he had the additional misfortune of being excommunicated by Anastasius, the Bishop of Rome, for his attachment to the opinions of Origen. Contemporary with Rufinus was Sulpicius Severus,† a native of Aquitania, and a man of rank and learning. He received ordination, and was extremely attached to the person and character of Martin, the venerable Bishop of Tours. He lived to become his biographer; and, besides his "Vita Beati Martini," he wrote three Epistles also relating to that Prelate. But his principal work was his "Sacra Historia:" it consists of two books, of which the contents extend from the time of Adam to the end of the fourth century. The only valuable portion of it is the conclusion, which contains some interesting contemporary information.

We are now approaching the period when the death of Constantine took place; and deeply do we regret that, with all his numerous failings in connexion with the Church and the State, he descended into the tomb with hands dabbled in the blood of his wife and son. An edict of the Emperor, published about this time, (Oct. 1st, 325,) manifestly indicates his real or affected suspicions, that a secret conspiracy had been formed against his person and his government. By all the allurements of honours and rewards, he invites informers of every degree to accuse, without exception, his Magistrates or Ministers, his friends or his most intimate favourites; protesting, with a

* His youth was spent among the Monks of Egypt; and he founded a monastery near his native village, Besanduce, in Palestine, and presided over it. He took up a violent animosity against the writings of Origen; and entered into a fierce dispute on the subject with John, Bishop of Jerusalem. He engaged Theophilus, Bishop of Alexandria, in the contest; and that Prelate, in a Council held in 399, caused the books of Origen to be condemned, and persecuted all the Monks that were suspected of holding his memory in veneration. Epiphanius followed his example; and, in a Council held in 401, procured a similar condemnation. Chrysostom condemned his proceedings; the discountenance of the Empress Eudoxia, and some discourse with Ammonius and his companions, followers of Origen, who had been banished by Theophilus, tempered his zeal, and he resolved on a return to Cyprus, without having effected anything. He died on his passage home, in 403.

† He first followed the legal profession; but, after the death of his wife, he led a retired and monastic life as a Presbyter in Aquitaine. He wrote Vita Sancti Martini Turonensis; Historia Sacra, or Chronica Sacra, in two books; (this is a brief history of religion, from the creation down to the Consulship of Stilicho and Aurelian, A.D. 400;) Dialogi Tres; and Epistolæ. Notwithstanding the superstitious tone which pervades all the works of Sulpicius, they have a charm, arising from their purity of diction, which scarcely any other writer of that age possesses. He seems to have taken Sallust as his model; and some writers have called him the Christian Sallust.

solemn asseveration, that he himself will listen to the charge, that he himself will revenge his injuries; and concluding with a prayer, which discovers some apprehension of danger, that the providence of the Supreme Being may still continue to protect the safety of the Emperor and of the empire. The informers, who complied with so liberal an invitation, were sufficiently versed in the arts of courts to select the friends and adherents of Crispus as the guilty persons; nor is there any reason to distrust the veracity of the Emperor, who had promised an ample measure of revenge and punishment. The policy of Constantine maintained, however, the same appearance of regard and confidence towards a son, whom he began to consider as his most irreconcileable enemy. The time was now arrived for celebrating the august ceremony of the twentieth year of the reign of Constantine; and the Emperor for that purpose removed his court from Nicomedia to Rome, where the most splendid preparations had been made for his reception. Every eye, and every tongue, affected to express their sense of the general happiness; and the veil of ceremony and dissimulation was drawn for a while over the darkest designs of revenge and murder. In the midst of the festival, the unfortunate Crispus was apprehended by order of the Emperor; who laid aside the tenderness of a father, without assuming the equity of a Judge. The examination was short and private;* and as it was thought decent to conceal the fate of the young Prince from the eyes of the Roman people, he was sent under a strong guard to Pola, in Istria; where soon afterwards he was put to death, either by the hands of the executioner, or by the more gentle operation, poison. The Cæsar Licinius, a youth of amiable manners, was involved in the ruin of Crispus; and the stern jealousy of Constantine was unmoved by the prayers and tears of his favourite sister, pleading for the life of a son, whose rank was his only crime, and whose loss she did not long survive. The story of these unhappy Princes, the nature and evidence of their guilt, the forms of their trial, and the circumstances of their death, were buried in mysterious obscurity; and the courtly Bishop Eusebius, who has celebrated in an elaborate work the virtues and piety of his hero, observes a prudent silence on the subject of these tragic and sanguinary events.†

The innocence of Crispus was ere long fully acknowledged; and the Greeks have endeavoured to palliate the conduct of Constantine

* Ἀκρίτως, "without a trial," is the strong, and most probably the just, expression of Suidas. The elder Victor, who wrote under the next reign, speaks with becoming caution. "Natu grandior incertum quâ causâ, patris judicio occidisset." If we consult the succeeding writers, Eutropius, the younger Victor, Orosius, Jerome, Zosimus, Philostorgius, and Gregory of Tours, their knowledge will appear gradually to increase, as their means of information must have diminished; a circumstance which frequently occurs in historical disquisition. (Gibbon.)

† Such haughty contempt for the opinion of mankind, while it imprints an indelible stain on the memory of Constantine, must remind us of the very different behaviour of one of the greatest Monarchs of the eighteenth century. The Czar Peter, in the full possession of despotic power, submitted to the judgment of Russia, of Europe, and of posterity, the reasons which had compelled him to subscribe the condemnation of a criminal, or at least of a degenerate, son. (Histoire de Pierre le Grand, par Voltaire, part ii., chap. 10.)

by asserting, that as soon as the Emperor discovered the falsehood of the accusation, by which his credulity had been so fatally misled, he published to the world his repentance and remorse; he even erected a golden statue of Crispus, with this inscription, "To my son, whom I unjustly condemned." A tale so moral and interesting would deserve to be supported by less exceptionable authority; but if we consult the more ancient and authentic writers, they will inform us, that the repentance of Constantine was manifested only in acts of blood and revenge; and that he atoned for the murder of an innocent son by the execution perhaps of a guilty wife. They ascribe the misfortunes of Crispus to the acts of his step-mother Fausta, whose implacable hatred, or whose disappointed love, renewed in the palace of Constantine the ancient tragedy of Hippolytus and Phædra.* Like the daughter of Minos, the daughter of Herculeus accused her son-in-law of an incestuous attempt on the chastity of his father's wife; and easily obtained from the jealousy of the Emperor a sentence of death against a young Prince, whom she considered, with reason, as the most formidable rival of her own children. But Helena, the aged mother of Constantine, lamented and revenged the untimely fate of her grandson Crispus. It was not long before Fausta was charged with having entertained an unlawful intrigue with a menial attached to the imperial household. Her condemnation and punishment were the immediate consequences of the accusation, and she was suffocated with the steam of a bath.† One would have imagined that the remembrance of a conjugal union of twenty years, and the honour of their common offspring, were calculated to soften the obdurate heart of Constantine, and to persuade him to suffer his wife, however guilty she might appear, to expiate her offences in a solitary prison. We shall not attempt to apportion the criminality which is due to the parties concerned. Suffice it to say, that before many months had elapsed the Emperor was called to a tribunal far superior to his own. One melancholy fact is awfully true: we allude to the feeble influence that genuine Christianity exercised upon the person or family of the Emperor.‡

After Constantine had humbled the pride of the Goths, who had recently attempted to raise the standard of rebellion against him, and received from the Ambassadors of Ethiopia, Persia, and the most remote countries of India, congratulations on the peace and prosperity of his government, he divided the empire among his sons, who were called Cæsars; to Constantine and Constans he awarded the western regions, and to Constantius the eastern; and as he was indisposed, and required to have recourse to bathing, he repaired for that purpose to Helenopolis, a city of Bithynia. If he estimated, among the favours which accompanied him through life, the death of his eldest

* Zosimus, lib. ii., p. 103, may be considered our original. The ingenuity of the moderns, assisted by a few hints from the ancients, has illustrated and improved his obscure and imperfect narrative.

† If Fausta were put to death, it is reasonable to believe that the private apartments of the palace were the scene of her execution. The orator Chrysostom indulges his fancy by exposing the naked Empress on a desert mountain, to be devoured by wild beasts.

‡ Gibbon, Decline and Fall, chap. xviii., p. 107, Milm. edit., 8vo.

son, of his nephew, and perhaps of his wife, he enjoyed certainly an uninterrupted flow of private as well as of public happiness till the thirtieth year of his reign; a period which none of his predecessors, since Augustus, had been permitted to celebrate. Constantine survived that solemn festival about ten months; and at the mature age of sixty-four, after a short illness, he ended his memorable life at the palace Aquyrion, in the suburbs of Nicomedia, whither he had retired for the benefit of the air, and with the hope of recruiting his exhausted strength by the use of the warm baths. After the soldiers had spent some time in lamentation and apparent sorrow, they lifted the body from its couch, and laid it in a golden coffin, which they enveloped in a covering of purple, and removed to the city which was called by his own name. Here it was placed in an elevated position, in the principal chamber of the imperial palace, and surrounded by candles burning in candlesticks of gold, presenting a marvellous spectacle, and such as no mortal had exhibited on earth since the world itself began. The forms of the court were strictly maintained. Every day, at the appointed hours, the principal officers of state, the army, and the household, approaching the person of their Sovereign, with bended knees and a composed countenance, offered their respectful homage as seriously as if he had been still alive. When Constantius, the late Emperor's second son, arrived, he proceeded to celebrate his father's funeral, himself heading the procession, which was preceded by detachments of soldiers in military array, and followed by vast multitudes, the body itself being surrounded by companies of spearmen and heavy-armed infantry. On the arrival of the procession at the church dedicated to the Apostles of our Saviour, the coffin was there entombed. Such honour did the youthful Emperor Constantius render to his deceased parent, both by his presence and by the due performance of the ceremony.*

The character of the Emperor, who removed the seat of government, and introduced many important changes into the civil and religious constitution of the country, has fixed the attention and divided the opinions of mankind. By the energetic, yet grateful, zeal of the Christians, the emancipator of the church has been adorned with all the attributes of a hero, and the qualifications of a saint, in a motley and incongruous confusion; while the discontent of the vanquished party has compared Constantine to the most abhorred of those tyrants who, by their vice and weakness, dishonoured the imperial purple. These sentiments have been perpetuated to succeeding generations; and the character of that Emperor is still considered by some an object of satire, and by others of panegyric. We cannot, in the true and legitimate sense of the term, designate Constantine a Christian. Lactantius, in the midst of the Emperor's court, was impatient to proclaim to the world the glorious example of the Sovereign of Gaul, who in the first moments of his reign acknow-

* Constantine had prepared for himself a stately tomb in the church of the Holy Apostles. (Euseb., De Vita Constant., lib. iv., cap. 60.) The best, and indeed almost the only, account of the sickness, death, and funeral of Constantine, is contained in the fourth book of his Life by Eusebius.

ledged and adored the majesty of the true and only God. Eusebius has ascribed the faith of Constantine to the miraculous sign which is supposed to have been displayed in the heavens, whilst he meditated and prepared the Italian expedition. The historian Zosimus maliciously asserts, that the Emperor had imbrued his hands in the blood of his eldest son, before he publicly renounced the gods of Rome and of his ancestors. But, according to the strictness of ecclesiastical language, the first of the Christian Emperors was unworthy of that name till the moment of his death; since it was only during his last illness that he received, as a catechumen, the imposition of hands, and was afterwards admitted by the initiatory rite of baptism into the number of the faithful. Eusebius informs us, that when he was convinced that his life was drawing to a close, he felt the time was come when he should seek to expiate the errors of his past career, firmly believing that whatever sins he had committed as a mortal man, his soul would be purified from them through the efficacy of the mysterious words and the salutary waters of baptism.* Its administration had been long delayed; and the custom, from the imperial example, would naturally gather fresh strength. Superstition had by this time taught men to connect, by a necessary union, the forgiveness of sins with the administration of the rite; and men who loved to continue in sin, protracted their baptism to a time when they imagined it might be of the greatest advantage to them. Little more need be said of Constantine's religious character: it was of a very dubious description, and appears to have been much of the same kind as that of his panegyrist Eusebius, whose pompous Life of Constantine gives no very favourable idea of the writer's own views of Christianity.†

The dying Emperor had committed the management of his funeral to the filial piety of Constantius, whom he intended to succeed to the empire in Italy and Africa. He was an Arian, and was by no means free from the intolerant and persecuting spirit which characterized that party in all its operations. As soon as he had taken possession of the palace of Constantinople, his first care was to remove the apprehensions of his kinsmen, by a solemn oath which he pledged for their security. His next employment was to find some specious pretence which might release his conscience from the obligation of an

* These words seem to prove that the Emperor now first became a catechumen. His postponement of baptism until his last illness, (after having stood forward so long as the public advocate and protector of the Christian religion,) and the superstitious reliance which he was encouraged to place on the late performance of this "mysterious" rite, afford an evidence of the melancholy obscuration of Christian truth at the very time when Christianity was ostensibly becoming the religion of the Roman empire. There is probably too much truth in the following remarks of Gibbon:—"The pride of Constantine, who refused the privileges of a catechumen, cannot easily be explained or excused; but the delay of his baptism may be justified by the maxims and practice of ecclesiastical antiquity. The sacrament of baptism was supposed to contain a full and absolute expiation of sin; and the soul was instantly restored to its original purity, and entitled to the promise of eternal salvation. Among the proselytes of Christianity, there were many who judged it imprudent to precipitate a salutary rite, which could not be repeated; to throw away an inestimable privilege, which could never be recovered." (Euseb., De Vita Constant., lib. iv., cap. 62, note.)

† Milner, History of the Church, vol. i., p. 536.

imprudent oath. When fraud and cruelty unite, a pretence is not long wanting. From the hands of that miserable time-server, Eusebius of Nicomedia, Constantius is said to have received a scroll, which he affirmed to be the last will and testament of his father, in which the Emperor expressed his suspicions that he had been poisoned by his brothers; and conjured his sons to revenge his death, and to consult their own safety by the punishment of the guilty.* A report of this description operated as the shock of a thunder-bolt hurled among an unsanctified and revengeful throng. Whatever reasons might have been alleged by these unfortunate Princes, to defend their lives and honour against so incredible an accusation, they were silenced by the furious clamours of the soldiers, who declared themselves at once their enemies, their judges, and their executioners. The forms of legal proceedings were violated in a promiscuous massacre. Among the victims, Hannibalianus was the most conspicuous. If it were needful to aggravate the horrors of this sanguinary proceeding, we might add, that Constantius had espoused the sister of Hannibalianus, and that he had bestowed his own sister upon the son of Julius. All these alliances which were formed by the policy of Constantius, utterly regardless of the public prejudice, and not to strengthen the bonds of fraternity and social friendship, served only to convince mankind that these Princes were as cold to the endearments of conjugal affection, as they were insensible to the ties of consanguinity, and the soul-thrilling entreaties of youth and innocence. Of so numerous a family, Gallus and Julian alone, the two youngest children of Julius Constantius, were saved from the hands of the assassins, till their rage, satiated with slaughter, had in some measure subsided. The Emperor, who in the absence of his brothers was the most obnoxious to guilt and reproach, discovered, on some future occasions, a faint and transient remorse for those cruelties, which the perfidious counsels of his Ministers, and the irresistible violence of the troops, had extorted from his unexperienced youth.†

Constantius furnishes too many materials to illustrate his disposition. One Eusebius, an eunuch, his Chamberlain, had great influence over him, and was himself the convert of an Arian Priest, whom Constantia had recommended to her brother, and to whom also the dying Emperor had intrusted his will. The Empress herself, the wife of Constantius, was infected with Arianism. By degrees,

* The authority for this improbable story is the Arian historian Philostorgius. (Hist. Eccles., lib. ii., cap. 17, p. 21. 4to. 1643.) But if such pretext were ever used by Constantius, it was laid aside with contempt as soon as it had served his immediate purpose. Athanasius mentions the oath which Constantius had taken for the security of his kinsmen. A modern writer (Guizot) states, that the authority of Philostorgius is so suspicious, as not to be sufficient to establish this fact; which Gibbon has inserted in his History as certain, while in a note he appears to doubt it.

† In after-days, Julian charged his cousin Constantius with the whole guilt of a massacre, from which he had himself so narrowly escaped. His assertion is confirmed by Athanasius, who, for reasons of a very different nature, was not less an enemy of Constantius. Zosimus joins in the same accusation. But the three abbreviators, Eutropius and the Victors, use very qualifying expressions:—"Sinente potius quam jubente;" "Incertum quo suasore;" "Vi militum." In our opinion, if Constantius and Eusebius of Nicomedia were to divide the guilt of the murderous act between them, one might obtain less, but neither of them more, than was his due.

the Emperor, a man of a weak understanding, corrupted with the pride of power, and ill-informed in anything that pertained to real Christianity, was confirmed in what was, at that early period, the fashionable heresy. There was then, during this whole reign, which extended from the year 337 to the year 361, a controversy carried on between the church and the heretics by arms and resources suited to the genius of the parties: those of the former were prayers, treatises, and preaching; of the latter, policy, intrigue, persecution, and the friendship of the great. The most zealous supporters of antiscriptural sentiments seemed far more disposed to cultivate the favour of men of rank, than to labour in the work of the ministry among the bulk of mankind.*

When Constantius ascended the throne, Paganism, like a pyramid on its point, was nodding to its fall. Eusebius, in three distinct passages in the Life of Constantine, asserts, that he prohibited sacrifice; that he issued two laws to prevent, both in the city and in the country, the pollutions of the old idolatry, the setting up of statues, divinations, and other unlawful practices, and to command the total abolition of sacrifice;† and throughout the Roman empire the "doors of idolatry" were closed to the people and to the army, and every kind of sacrifice was suspended.‡ Theodoret asserts that Constantine prohibited sacrifice; and, though he did not destroy, shut up all the temples. In a passage of his panegyric,§ Eusebius asserts, that he sent two officers into every part of the empire, who compelled the Priests to surrender up the statues of their gods, which, having been despoiled of their ornaments, were melted and destroyed. These strong assertions of Eusebius are, to a certain extent, confirmed by expressions in the laws of his successors, especially one of Constans, which appeals to an edict of his father Constantine, which forbade sacrifice.‖ On the other hand, we have statements somewhat contradictory, in which the late Emperor proclaims the most impartial toleration to Paganism, as well as Christianity, deprecating compulsion in all religious matters. "Let all enjoy," said he, "the same peace; let no one disturb another in his religious worship; let each act as he thinks fit; let those who withhold their allegiance from Thee," (it is an address to the Deity,) "have their temples of falsehood, if they think right."¶ He exhorts to mutual charity, and declares, "It is a very different thing willingly to submit to trials for the sake of immortal life, and to force others by penalties to embrace our faith."** These sentiments present a great incongruity with the edicts previously promulgated; and pagan writers have not been scrupulous in

* Milner, History of the Church, cent. iv., chap. iv., vol. i., p. 538.

† Euseb., De Vita Const., lib. ii., cap. 44, 45.

‡ Theodoret., Hist. Eccles., lib. vi., cap. 21; compare Sozomen, Hist. Eccles., lib. iii., cap. 17; Orosius, lib. vii., cap. 28.

§ Euseb., De Laudib. Constantini, cap. 8.

‖ "Cesset superstitio, sacrificiorum aboleatur insania. Nam quicunque contra legem divi Principis, parentis nostri, et hanc nostræ mansuetudinis jussionem ausus fuerit sacrificia celebrare, competens in eum vindicta, et præsens sententia exseratur." (Cod. Theodos., lib. xvi., cap. 10, 2; see, likewise, the note of Godefroy.)

¶ Euseb., De Vita Constant., lib. ii., cap. 26.

** Ibid., cap. 60.

their charges of inconsistency against the memory of their former ruler. Historical records strongly confirm the idea, that Paganism was openly professed; its temples in some places were restored, its rites celebrated; neither were its priesthood degraded from their immunities, nor the estates belonging to the temples generally alienated; in short, that it was the public religion of a large portion of the empire, and still confronted Christianity, if not on equal terms, yet with pertinacious resistance, down to the reign of Theodosius, and even that of his sons. Constantine himself, though he neither offered sacrifices, nor consulted the Sybilline Books, nor would go up to the temple of the Capitoline Jupiter, with the Senate and the people, performed, nevertheless, some of the functions—at least, he did not disdain the appellation—of Supreme Pontiff. We may with confidence assert, that there were two kinds of sacrifices abolished by Constantine; namely, the private sacrifices connected with unlawful acts of theurgy and of magic; those midnight offerings to the powers of darkness, which in themselves were illegal, and led to scenes of unhallowed licence;* and also those which might be considered the state sacrifices, offered by the Emperor himself, or by his representatives in his name, either in the cities or in the army. Though Constantine advanced many Christians to offices of trust, and no doubt many who were ambitious of such posts conformed to the religion of the Emperor, probably most of the high dignities of the state were held by Pagans. An edict might be required to induce them to depart from the customary usage of sacrifice, which, with the Christian officers, would quietly fall into desuetude. But still, the sacrifices made by the priesthood, at the expense of the sacerdotal establishments, and out of their own estates,—though in some instances these estates were seized by Constantine, and the sacerdotal Colleges reduced to poverty,—and the public sacrifices offered by the piety of distinguished individuals, would be made as usual. In the capital there can be little doubt that sacrifices were offered, in the name of the Senate and the people of Rome.† Much now depended on the faithfulness and exemplary piety of the Christian name: the sharp end of the wedge had procured a lodgment in the blood-cemented structure of Paganism and falsehood, which threatened to rase it from its antiquated and deep-seated foundations. In process of time this happily was the case.

Persia had long been a reluctant tributary to Rome; but the mili-

* M. La Bastie and M. Beugnot would consider the terms, Τα μυσαρα της ειδωλολατρειας, in the rescript of Constantine, and the "insana superstitio" of the law of Constans, to refer exclusively to these nocturnal and forbidden sacrifices. M. Beugnot has observed, that Constantine always uses respectful and courteous language concerning Paganism: "Vetus observantia, vetus consuetudo; templorum solemnia; consuetudinis gentilitiæ solemnitas." The laws of the later Emperors employ very different terms: "Error; dementia; error veterum; profanus ritus; sacrilegus ritus; nefarius ritus; superstitio pagana, damnabilis, damnata, deterrima, impia; funestæ superstitionis errores; stolidus Paganorum error." (Cod. Theodos., tom. v., p. 255; Beugnot, tom. i., p. 80.)

† Milman, History of Christianity, vol. ii., p. 464.

tary fame of Constantine, and the real or apparent strength of his government, suspended any attempt at rebellion being carried into execution. The death of Constantine was the signal for revolt;* and the actual condition of the Syrian and Armenian frontier seemed to encourage the Persians by the prospect of a rich spoil, and an easy conquest. The example of the massacres of the palace diffused a spirit of licentiousness and sedition among the troops of the East, who were no longer restrained by their habits of obedience to a veteran commander. By the prudence of Constantius, who, from the interview with his brothers in Pannonia, immediately hastened to the banks of the Euphrates, the legions were gradually restored to a sense of duty and discipline. But the season of anarchy had permitted Sapor II., King of Persia, to form the siege of Nisibis, and to occupy several of the most important fortresses of Mesopotamia. In Armenia the renowned Tiridates† had long enjoyed the peace and glory which he deserved, by his valour and fidelity to the cause of Rome. The firm alliance which he maintained with Constantine was productive of spiritual as well as of temporal benefits: by the conversion of Tiridates, the character of a saint was added to that of a hero, the Christian faith was preached and established from the Euphrates to the shores of the Caspian, and Armenia was attached to the empire by the double ties of policy and religion. But as many of the Armenian nobles refused to renounce Paganism, the public tranquillity was disturbed by a discontented faction, which insulted the Sovereign, and rejoiced in his decease, which took place after a reign of fifty-six years. His lawful heir was driven into exile, the Christian Priests were either murdered or driven from their churches, the barbarous tribes of Albania were solicited to descend from their mountains; and two of the most powerful Governors, usurping the ensigns or the powers of royalty, implored the assistance of Sapor, and opened the gates of their cities to the Persian garrison. The Christian party sought for succour from Rome; and, after a diversity of reverses, the Armenians submitted to the conditions of peace which Sapor condescended to impose,—the payment of an annual tribute, and the restitution of the fertile province of Atropatene, which the courage of Tiridates, and the victorious arms of Galerius, had annexed to the Armenian monarchy.

During the comparatively long reign of Constantius, the provinces of the East were afflicted by the calamities of the Persian war. The irregular incursions of the light troops alternately spread terror and desolation beyond the Tigris and beyond the Euphrates, from the gates of Ctesiphon to those of Antioch; and this active service was performed by the Arabs of the desert, who were divided in their interest and affections; some of their independent chiefs being

* Constantine had endeavoured to allay the fury of the persecutions which, at the instigation of the Magi and the Jews, Sapor had commenced against the Christians.

† Tiridates had sustained a war against Maximinus, caused by the hatred of the latter to Christianity. Armenia was the first nation which embraced the faith of the Redeemer. About the year 276 it was the religion of the King, the nobles, and the people of Armenia.

enlisted in the service of Sapor, whilst others had engaged their doubtful fidelity to the Emperor.* Constantine had long before his death contemplated a war with Persia, on account of the protracted friendship which had existed between Tiridates and the court of Rome. The aggressive, predatory, and persecuting temper of Sapor had frequently perpetrated annoyances upon the territories of the Armenian Monarch; so that Constantine, at the close of his life, resolved to punish the aggressor, and to protect the injured. The more grave and important operations of the war were conducted with considerable vigour, and the armies of Rome and of Persia encountered each other in nine bloody fields, in two of which Constantius himself commanded in person. The event of the day was most commonly adverse to the Romans; but in the battle of Singara, their imprudent valour had almost achieved a signal and decisive victory. The stationary troops of Singara retired on the approach of Sapor, who passed the Tigris, and occupied the village of Hilleh, which by his pioneers he surrounded in one day with a deep ditch and a lofty rampart. After a slight resistance the Persians fled in disorder before the Romans, unable to resist the strength of the heavy legions. Constantius, who hurried along in the pursuit, attempted, without effect, to restrain the ardour of his troops, by representing to them the dangers of the approaching night, and the certainty of completing their success on the following day. But they depended more on their own valour than on the experience or the abilities of their chief; they silenced by their clamours his timid remonstrances, and, rushing with fury to the charge, filled up the ditch, broke down the rampart, and dispersed themselves through the tents to recruit their exhausted strength, and to enjoy the rich harvest of their labours. The Persian Monarch watched the moment of victory. His army, of which the greater part, securely posted on the heights, had been spectators of the action, advanced in silence, and under the shadow of the night; and his archers, guided by the illumination of the camp, poured a shower of arrows on a disarmed and licentious crowd. The Romans were vanquished with a dreadful slaughter, and the flying remnant was exposed to the most intolerable hardships.† The courtly flattery of some of the panegyrists of Constantius attribute the whole of this disaster to the disobedience of the soldiery, rather than to any want of military prudence and courage on the part of the Emperor: nevertheless, one of these venal scribblers relates, with amazing coolness, an act of such incredible cruelty as, in the judgment of posterity, must imprint a far deeper stain on the honour of the imperial name. The son of Sapor, the heir of his crown, had been made a captive in the Persian camp. The unhappy youth, who might have

* Ammianus gives a lively description of the wandering and predatory life of the Saracens, who stretched from the confines of Assyria to the cataracts of the Nile. It appears from the adventures of Malchus, which Jerome has related in so entertaining a manner, that the high road between Berea and Edessa was infested by these robbers.

† The Persian historians, or romancers, do not mention the battle of Singara, but make the captive Shahpour (Sapor) escape, and defeat and take prisoner the Roman Emperor. The Roman captives were forced to repair all the ravages they had committed, even to replanting the smallest trees. (Milman.)

excited the compassion of the most savage enemy, was scourged, tortured, and publicly executed by the inhuman Romans.

Sapor could not, however, consider himself a conqueror, so long as the fortified towns of Mesopotamia, and especially the fortified city of Nisibis,* remained in the possession of the Romans, before which he had been frequently repulsed. This large and populous city was situate about two days' journey from the Tigris, in the midst of a pleasant and fertile plain at the foot of Mount Massius. A triple enclosure of brick-walls was defended by a deep ditch, and the garrison was encouraged by the desperate gallantry of the people. The citizens were also animated by the exhortations of the Bishop; they were inured to arms by the presence of danger, and roused by the intentions of Sapor to plant a Persian colony in their room, and to lead them away into distant and barbarous captivity. The result of two former failures, whilst they elated the confidence of the people, had exasperated the haughty spirit of the Persian King, who, with the united forces of Persia and the neighbourhood, was resolved to undergo no further defeat. The ordinary machines invented to batter or undermine the walls, were rendered ineffectual by the superior skill of the Romans; and many days had vainly elapsed, when Sapor embraced a resolution worthy of an Eastern Monarch, who believed that the elements themselves were subject to his power. At the stated season of the melting of the snows in Armenia, the river Mygdonius, which divides the plain and the city of Nisibis, forms, like the Nile, an inundation over the adjacent country. By the labour of the Persians the course of the river was stopped below the town, and the waters were confined on every side by solid mounds of earth. On this artificial lake a fleet of armed vessels filled with soldiers, and with engines which discharged stones of five hundred pounds weight, advanced in order of battle, and engaged, almost upon a level, the troops which defended the ramparts.† The irresistible force of the waters was alternately fatal to the contending parties, till at length a portion of the walls, unable to sustain the accumulated pressure, gave way at once, and exposed an ample breach of one hundred and fifty feet. The Persians were instantly driven to the assault, and the fate of Nisibis depended on the event of the day. The heavy-armed cavalry, who led the van of a deep column, were embarrassed in the mud, and great numbers were drowned in the unseen holes which had been

* Nisibis was a very ancient, noble, and strong city of Mesopotamia, in Mygdonia, towards the Tigris. Some ascribe its origin to Nimrod, and suppose it to be the Achad of Moses. It was built by a colony of Macedonians, who called it Antiochia of Mygdonia. Strabo says it was situated at the foot of Mount Massius. It was the Roman bulwark against the Parthians and Persians. It sustained three memorable sieges against the power of Sapor, A.D. 338, 346, and 350. But the Emperor Jovianus, by an ignominious peace, delivered it up to the Persians, A.D. 363. Nisibis is now reduced to one hundred and fifty houses; the marshy lands produce rice, and the fertile meadows, as far as Mosul and the Tigris, are covered with the ruins of towns and villages. (Niebuhr, Voyages, tom. ii., pp. 300—309.)

† Macdonald Kinnier observes on these floating batteries, "As the elevation of the place is considerably above the level of the country in its immediate vicinity, and the Mygdonius is a very insignificant stream, it is difficult to imagine how this work could have been accomplished, even with the wonderful resources which the King must have had at his disposal."

filled by the rushing waters. The elephants, made furious by their wounds, increased the disorder, and trampled down thousands of the Persian archers. The great King, who from an exalted throne beheld the misfortunes of his arms, sounded, with reluctant indignation, the signal of retreat, and suspended for some hours the prosecution of the attack. But the vigilant citizens improved the opportunity of the night, and the return of day discovered a new wall of six feet in height, rising every moment to fill up the interval of the breach. Notwithstanding the disappointment of his hopes, and the loss of more than twenty thousand men, Sapor still pressed the reduction of Nisibis with an obstinate firmness which could have yielded only to the necessity of defending the Eastern provinces of Persia against a formidable invasion of the Massagetæ.* Alarmed by this intelligence, he hastily relinquished the siege, and marched with rapid diligence from the banks of the Tigris to those of the Oxus. The dangers and difficulties of the Scythian war engaged him soon afterwards to conclude, or at least to observe, a truce with the Roman Emperor, which was equally grateful to both Princes; as Constantius himself, after the death of his brothers, was involved, by the revolutions of the West, in a civil contest, which required and seemed to exceed the most vigorous exertion of his undivided strength.† This "dearth and din of war" were by no means favourable to the interests of Christianity, especially in Persia: the condition, therefore, of the church of Christ in that country will engage our attention in the subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER II.

Effect of the Contests between Rome and Persia upon the Church—Intolerance of the Magi—Their History and Character—Zoroaster—Zendavista—Armenia, the first Christian Country—By whom Christianity was introduced—Struggles and Persecution with which it had to contend—Tiridates—Gregory the Apostle of Armenia, and his Successors—Persian Persecution—Sapor—Simeon, Archbishop of Seleucia—His Character—Martyrdom of Usthazares—Of Simeon—Numerous Sufferers—Martyrdom of Pusicius—Persecution increases—Maruthas—Tarbula and others martyred—Martyrdom of Acepsimas, Joseph, and Aithalas—Multitude of Martyrs and Confessors—Bardemus suffers—Case of Narses—Commemoration of Martyrs—Martyrdom of Milles—Effect of these Persecutions—Buoyant Spirit of Christianity—State of the Church—Religious Character of the Sons of Constantine—Death of Eusebius the Historian—And of Alexander, Bishop of Constantinople—Paul his Successor—His Character and untimely End—Altered State of Discipline in the Church—Macedonius and Macedonians—Deposition of Athanasius—Gregory

* We are obliged to Zonaras (tom. i., lib. xiii., p. 11) for an account of this invasion of the Massagetæ, which is perfectly consistent with the general series of events of which we darkly read in the broken history of Ammianus. The Massagetæ were a people of Scythia, east of the Caspian sea, who had their wives in common, and dwelt in tents. They had no temples, but worshipped the sun, to which they offered horses on account of their swiftness. When their parents had come to a certain age, they generally put them to death, and ate their flesh, mixed with that of cattle.

† Gibbon, Decline and Fall, vol. iii., chap. xviii., p. 142. Milman, edit. 8vo.

of Cappadocia—Philagrius—Persecuting Acts of Gregory—Athanasius flies to Rome—Sufferings of Potamo—Address of Athanasius to the Orthodox—Remarks of Milner the Historian—Eusebius of Nicomedia translated to Constantinople—His Character—Hermogenes is killed in a Tumult—Constans and Constantius contrasted—Council of Sardica—Proceedings of—Its Objects were frustrated—Hosius of Corduba—Disastrous Appearance of the Church—Council of Milan in 347—Photinus condemned—Pretended Recantation of Ursaces and Valens—Feigned Reconciliation of Constantius with Athanasius—Its gross Inconsistency—Athanasius is restored to Alexandria—Onager—Deposition of Stephen the Arian—Persian War—The Admonitions of Constans—Success of the Arms of Constantius—Want of Talent in Constans—Magnentius—Conspiracy against Constans—Magnentius assumes the Purple—And Constans is slain—Constantius refuses to treat with the Usurper—Engages in a severe Contest, which ends in the Defeat of Magnentius, who ultimately falls on his Sword—The Mask is now discarded by Constantius—Athanasius considered a personal Enemy to the Emperor—Distressed State of the Church—Synods of Arles and Milan—Persecution by the Arians—Effects following the late Restoration of Athanasius—Marcellus—The Sabellians and Arians—Athanasius flies to Rome—And other Prelates are banished—Some Bishops were slain or cruelly treated—George, the Arian Bishop of Alexandria—His fearful persecuting Acts—Cruel Treatment of the Exiles—Tragic Scenes on a "Trinity Sunday"—Persecution in Alexandria—Account of Secundus, a Priest—Orthodox Prelates of Egypt and Libya banished—Death of Paul referred to—Triumph of Macedonius—Weakness of Constantius—Baneful Influence of Prosperity—Council of Milan—Lucifer, Bishop of Cagliari—Eusebius, Bishop of Vercellæ—Hilary the Deacon is scourged—Liberius, Bishop of Rome—Is summoned to Milan—His Interview with Constantius—Liberius is banished—Felix supersedes him in his See—Drooping State of the Church illustrated in the Defection of Liberius—And also of Hosius, Bishop of Corduba—Extract from one of his Epistles—Continued Privations of Athanasius—His Address to Dracontius—Constantius resorts to Violence—Cathedral of Alexandria invested by Soldiers—In the Confusion the Prelate escapes—Flees among the Monks and Hermits of the Desert—Who protect him—Many Treatises written during this Retreat—Insolence of Paganism—George of Cappadocia—Cruelties perpetrated by him—Milner quoted—Projected Union of the Orthodox and Novatian Churches—Which proved abortive—Eusebius of Vercellæ—Persecution increases—The Novatians suffer—Character of Novatianism—Zeal displayed in favour of Christianity—Admonitory Case of Hosius—Treatment he underwent from Constantius—Defection of Hosius—Triumph of the Arians—Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers—Death of Hosius—Council at Ariminum—Meletius, Bishop of Antioch—Is subsequently banished—Euzoius—Eustathians—Melancholy Condition of the Church—Value of Creeds—The Athanasian Controversy prepared the way for the Church at Rome to assume the Supremacy—Arianism continues in the Ascendant—Felix the elect Bishop of Rome—Hilary on the State of the Church—Council of Seleucia—And of Ariminum—The Orthodox Faith was recognised by the latter—The Machinations and Intrigues of the Arians afterward prevailed—The Synod of Seleucia—Arianism triumphant—Aetius—Eunomians—Macedonius—Eudoxus—The Christian World in Confusion—Miserable Policy of the Emperor—The Persian War—Illness and Death of Constantius—Accession of Julian to the Throne—His Character—Throws the Shield of Protection over Paganism—Which he openly encourages—Policy of his Attempts against the Christian Faith—Athanasius—Previous Career of Julian—Townsend's Remarks on Gibbon—Julian's Attempts to abolish the Name of Christian—Cause of his Dislike to it—Numerous Restrictions inflicted on the Christians—Early Education of Julian seriously defective—The Conduct of Constantius towards him—Whose general Behaviour tended to excite Disgust in the Mind of Julian—The Influence upon him of the Death of Gallus—Effects of the Death of Constantius upon Julian—The unchristian Christianity of the late Emperor—Julian restores Paganism—His indo-

nitable Hatred of Constantine—General Character of Julian—Prosperity of Heathenism—Julian's Mode of Attack on Christianity—Schemes of philosophical Infidels—Ridicule a Weapon in the Hands of the Heathen—Policy of Julian—Professes to abstain from open Persecution—Treatment of the Bishops and inferior Clergy—Vigilant Malice of Julian—Projects the rebuilding of the Temple—Insurmountable Obstacles to its accomplishment—Suppression of Learning among the Christians—The ensnaring Artifices of Julian—Martyrdom of Juventinus and Maximinus—Degradation of Cæsarea—Maris, Bishop of Chalcedon—Julian attempts to seduce the Followers of Christ—Sufferings of the Presbyter Basil—His Fidelity and Zeal—His Courage and Fortitude—Tortures inflicted by Julian on Basil—Frumentius—Who adds to the Torments—Under which Basil expires—Martyrdom of Gordian—Of John and Paul—Artemius—Cassian—Bonosus and Maximilian—Bibiana—Marcus, Bishop of Arethusa—Many Martyrs—Cæsarius—Persecutions at Merum—Julian visits Antioch—Death of George of Alexandria—Arianism—Lucifer of Cagliari—Fate of Athanasius—The Persian War—Martyrdom of Theodore—Council of Alexandria—Efforts still made to restore Paganism—Persecutions of Julian—Treatment of the Christians—Removal of Babylas—Temple of Apollo burnt—Profanity of Julian—Miracles—Character of Julian—Publia—Death of Julian—Julian an Author—Remarks on his Decease.

In the Persian empire it was indeed the hour of darkness with regard to the Christian church. Though Constantine had been instrumental in stilling the tempest, producing outward tranquillity, and establishing Christianity throughout the Roman empire, yet, in other countries not subject to him, the Christians met with usage from the infidels similar to that which they had received from the persecuting Emperors of Rome. This was more especially the case in Persia under Sapor, who swayed the sceptre in that country at the same time that Constantine wore the purple in Rome: here many of the Christians sought refuge from the violence and cruelty of Galerius during the late persecutions, and these spread the Gospel, and brought many to believe on Christ with the heart unto righteousness. The idolatrous Priests, sickened with envy, accused them to Sapor the King, of holding treasonable correspondence with the Romans, who were at war with the Persians: they were immediately oppressed with heavy taxation, and orders were issued to massacre every Priest among them. It was in the ancient dominions of Darius and of Xerxes that the old religion of Zoroaster * resumed its power and authority. No sooner had

* He was an ancient Oriental philosopher. He is generally regarded as the Zerdusht of the Persians, who reformed the religion of the Magi, and wrote the Zendavista, which contains his pretended revelations; which the ancient Magi and modern Parsees observe and reverence in the same manner as Christians do the Bible, making it the sole rule of their faith and manners. It includes also a reformed system of Magianism, a compendium of which is the Sadder, both regarded as of sacred authority. They taught, that there is a Supreme Being, eternal, self-existent, and independent; who created both light and darkness, out of which he made all other things; that these are in a state of conflict which will continue to the end of the world; that then there shall be a general resurrection and a judgment, and that just retribution shall be rendered unto men according to their works; that the angel of darkness, with his followers, shall be consigned to a place of everlasting gloom and punishment; and the angel of light, with his disciples, introduced into a state of everlasting glory and happiness; after which, light and darkness shall no more interfere with each other. It is evident from these and various other sentiments contained in the Zend, that many parts of it are taken out of the Old Testament. Dr. Baumgarten asserts, that this work contains doctrines, opinions, and facts actually borrowed from the Jews, Christians, and Mahommedans; whence, and from

Artaxerxes destroyed the last remains of the foreign Parthian dynasty, and re-organized the dominion of the native Persian Kings, than he hastened to environ his throne with the Magian hierarchy, and to re-establish the sacerdotal order in all its former dignity. But an ancient religion, which has sunk into obscurity, will not regain its full influence over the popular mind unless re-invested with divine authority; intercourse with heaven must be renewed, the sanction and ratification of the Deity must be public and acknowledged. These supernatural interpositions were assumed, and the Magi again wielded the emblems of authority and office. An hierarchy which suddenly regains its power after centuries of obscurity, and perhaps of oppression, will not be scrupulous as to the means of giving strength and permanence to its dominion. The re-establishment of a national religion, as the strongest and most enduring bond of union between the rulers and the ruled, was an essential part of the scheme of that Monarch of Persia; but a national religion, thus associated with the civil polity, is necessarily exclusive, and impatient of the rivalry of other creeds. Intolerance lies in the very nature of a religion which, dividing the whole world into the realm of two conflicting principles, raises one part of mankind into a privileged order, as followers of the good principle, and condemns the other half as the irreclaimable slaves of the evil one. The national worship is identified with that of Ormusd, and the kingdom of Ormusd must be purified from the intrusion of the followers of Ahriman. The foreign relations, so to speak, of the Persian monarchy, according to their old poetical history, are strongly coloured by their deep-rooted religious opinions. Their implacable enemies, the pastoral Tartar or Turcoman tribes, inhabit the realm of darkness, and invade at times and desolate the kingdom of light; till some mighty Monarch, or some redoubtable hero, re-asserts the majesty, and revenges the losses, of the kingdom of Ormusd. Iran and Turan are the representatives of the two conflicting worlds of light and darkness. In the same spirit, to expel, to persecute the followers of other religions, was to eject, to trample upon the followers of Ahriman. The edict of Artaxerxes closed all the temples but those of the fire-worshippers. Of the loss sustained by Christianity during the conflict we have no record. The persecutions by the followers of Zoroaster are only to be traced at a

other circumstances, he concludes, that both the history and writings of this Prophet were probably invented in the later ages. The fundamental article of Zoroaster's system is the celebrated doctrine of these two principles; being an attempt of Eastern philosophy to reconcile the existence of moral and physical evil with the attributes of a wise and benevolent Creator of the world. The primary and original principle, by whom all things exist, is termed by Zoroaster, "Time without bounds." From its operation were from all eternity produced the active principles Ormusd and Ahriman; each possessed of the power of creation, but disposed to exercise it with different designs. Ormusd is the benevolent author of everything conducive to virtue and happiness. Ahriman is the malignant power, "who has pierced the egg of Ormusd," or mingled evil with all the good of his production. At the final consummation, goodness shall be triumphant over its opposite: Ahriman and its followers will sink into their native darkness, and virtue will maintain the universe in everlasting concord. Zoroaster died B.C. 513. Afterwards, the system which he had established was disturbed by a thousand schisms; many reforms were introduced; but the religion gradually sank to a mere idolatrous worship of the fire and the sun.

later period, in Armenia, and in the Babylonian province; but Persia, from this time until the fiercer persecutions of their own brethren forced the Nestorian Christians to overleap every obstacle, presented a stern and insuperable barrier to the progress of Christianity.* It cut off all connexion with the Christian communities in the remoter East.†

But while Persia fiercely repelled Christianity from its frontier, upon that frontier arose a Christian state. Armenia was the first country which embraced Christianity as the religion of the King, the nobles, and the people. During the early ages of the empire, Armenia had been an object of open contention, or of political intrigue, between the conflicting powers of Parthia and of Rome. The adoption of Christianity as the religion of the State, while it united the interests of the kingdom by a closer bond with the Christian empire of Rome, added to its perilous situation on the borders of the two empires a new cause for the implacable hostility of Persia. Every successful invasion, and every subtle negotiation to establish the Persian predominance in Armenia, was marked by the most relentless and sanguinary persecutions; which were endured with the combined dignity of Christian and patriotic heroism by the afflicted people. The Patriarch was always the first victim of the Persian conquest. The Armenian histories, written, almost without exception, by the priesthood, in order to do honour to their native country by its early reception of Christianity, have included the Syrian kingdom of Edessa within its borders, and assigned a place to the celebrated Abgar in the line of their Kings. The supposed personal correspondence of Abgarus with the divine Author of Christianity is, of course, incorporated in this early legend. But though, no doubt, Christianity had made considerable progress at the commencement of the third century, the government of Armenia was still sternly and irreconcilably Pagan. Khosrov I. imitated the cruel and impious Pharaoh.‡ He compelled the Christians, on a scanty stipend, to labour on the public works. Many obtained the glorious crown of martyrdom. Ultimately Khosrov was assassinated through the jealous ambition of the King of Persia: the assassin was pursued, and lost his life in the flight. The vengeance of the soldiery wreaked itself on the family of the murderer, whose

* Sozomen, indeed, asserts, that Christianity was first introduced into the Persian dominions at a later period, from their intercourse with Osroene and Armenia. But it is very improbable that the active zeal of the Christians, in the first ages of the religion of Christ, should not have taken advantage of the mild and tolerant government of the Parthian Kings. "Parthians and Elamites," that is, Jews inhabiting those countries, are mentioned as among the converts on the day of Pentecost. (Sozom., Hist. Eccles., lib. ii., cap. 8.)

† Milman, History of Christianity, vol. ii., p. 316.

‡ Khosrov, after the custom of the Armenian Monarchs, began to add improvements to his kingdom; erecting cities, towns, and villages, and adorning them with palaces, caravansaries, and other public buildings. In imitation of the persecution of the Jews by Pharaoh, this Prince compelled all the Christians he found in his dominions to labour at these works, giving them but what was barely sufficient to support life as a remuneration. Many were put to death by him on account of their faith, and thus obtained the glorious crown of martyrdom. (History of Armenia, by Father Michael Chamich. Translated from the original Armenian, by Johannes Avdall, Esq. 8vo. 2 vols. Vol. i., p. 153. Calcutta, at the Bishop's-College press.)

infant alone escaped through the instrumentality of a Christian nurse, and afterwards became Gregory the Apostle of Armenia. The whole family of Khosrov was put to death except Tiridates, who fled to the Romans, and served with distinction in the armies of Diocletian, and seized a favourable opportunity of recovering the throne of his ancestors. The re-establishment of Armenia, as a friendly power, was an important event in the Eastern policy of Rome: the simultaneous conversion of the empire and its Eastern ally to the new religion, strengthened the bonds of union by a common religious interest. Gregory re-entered his native country in the wake of the triumphant Tiridates, who was still an indomitable Pagan, professing the Magian system. He had resolved to offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving for his restoration to his hereditary throne, and Gregory was commanded to assist. But he resolutely refused; and endured, according to the Armenian history, twelve different kinds of torture; and was then immured in a deep dungeon, where he languished fourteen years, supported by the faithful charity of a Christian female. At the end of that period, we are told that the sister of Tiridates embraced the faith, and advised the release of Gregory; who, on his enlargement, healed the King, who was suffering from a direful malady which was then awfully prevalent. The pestilence ceased; the King and his nobles submitted to baptism, and Armenia became Christianized. The province of Dara, the sacred spot in the estimation of the Armenians, which was crowded with their temples, made a stern and dogged resistance. The heathen priesthood fought for their altars with desperate courage; and it was at the point of the sword only that Christian places of worship could be erected. Strong efforts were made to suppress Christianity; but, notwithstanding the stupendous measures which were adopted in order to succeed in their enterprise, they miserably failed, and the Christian church became triumphant.*

* According to the testimony of Father Chamich, Tiridates was invited to attend the Council at Nice, but was prevented doing so by important affairs in Armenia. Gregory was present, and returned with the celebrated Creed. On his arrival he assembled his Clergy, and, it is said, chanted a Te Deum. From this period Gregory withdrew himself from all intercourse with men, and, retiring into Upper Armenia, fixed his abode in a cavern in Mount Sepuh until his death. The whole time of his superintendence of the Armenian church was thirty years. Aristakes, a son of Gregory, succeeded his father in the pontifical chair: he governed the church with prudence and holiness; discharged the duties of his office with fidelity, so much so, that one of the Armenian Chiefs called Archelaus, having been admonished by the Prelate, was so irritated against him, that, waylaying the Pontiff while journeying on a visit to the province of the Zophs, he slew him. Aristakes was succeeded by his elder brother Vertaunes, who was remarkable for his wisdom, piety, and zeal. But, notwithstanding the zealous efforts of Vertaunes, many of the Armenian Chiefs relaxed from the strict observances of Christian piety, by taking concubines, and committing other indecencies. When Tiridates beheld these actions of his principal subjects, he besought them to desist from such iniquity, and to lead a life more consistent with the Christian faith: perceiving the inefficacy of his exhortations, and that the Chiefs daily departed from the paths of virtue, he became disgusted with the affairs of the world, and relinquished his earthly crown, in order to attempt the attainment of a heavenly one. He retired from the government, and secluded himself in the same place, on Mount Sepuh, where Gregory died, where he led a life of mortification and self-denial, devoting himself to the worship of his Creator and the blessed Saviour. The Chiefs then assembled together, and, after deliberating on the affairs of the kingdom, determined to endeavour to induce their old King to return, promising in that event to amend their lives. But he, knowing their ill disposition,

We are far from being surprised, when we consider the character of the belligerents, and the barbarous times in which they lived, that outbreaks of sanguinary cruelty and of rancorous hatred toward the Christian name should have been displayed, especially on the part of Sapor;* who attributed the alliance of Armenia with Rome, and the Christian character of both nations, as the grand cause of all his recent humiliation and defeat. All the Christians, over whom he was enabled to sway the sceptre, had but little mercy to anticipate at his hands. Among others, the Magi and idolatrous Priests accused Simeon, the Archbishop of Seleucia, Ctesiphon, another Bishop in Persia, and several other Ecclesiastics, to the number of one hundred and twenty-eight, before Sapor, with having betrayed the affairs of the Persians to the Romans. Sapor was enraged, and commanded Simeon to be brought before him: when he was introduced, he conducted himself throughout as a valiant champion of Christ, and worthy of the high profession which he bore. When the King commanded him to be tormented, he flinched not from the trial; nor, craven-like, did he sue for pardon. Sapor, wondering at his fortitude, asked why he did not kneel before him as heretofore. The Bishop replied, "Having free admittance to the royal presence, he did not scruple in conforming to the customary salutation of the country; but, being now brought before him a prisoner for the truth of his religion, and the cause of the Almighty Jehovah, it was no longer lawful for him to kneel, lest he should be thought to worship the Monarch of Persia, and betray his faith, which he was resolved to defend with his latest breath." Upon this declaration, which Sapor could no longer mistake, the King insisted upon his prompt and entire submission; and left it to his own choice, whether he would kneel and worship, after the custom of the country, promising great advantages if he complied with the mandate; and at the same time threatening, if he refused, to put him and all the Christians in the country to death.† Simeon,

refused to resume his crown, for which they in revenge poisoned him. They attempted also to slay Vertaunes; but on their surrounding him to complete their bloody designs, their hands, it is said, were withheld by an invisible power, and the Bishop passed through them. (Chamich, History of Armenia, vol. i., p. 167.)

* King Hormisdas, the father of Sapor, dying, left his Queen pregnant; and the infant in the womb was immediately proclaimed King by the Magians, who went so far as to crown it, yet unborn, by placing the diadem for that purpose upon the mother. Thus Sapor was born King in 310, and lived seventy years, dying in 380; and the beginning of his reign was dated in 309, some months before his birth. He was the ninth King of the Saxanite, or fourth dynasty of the Persian Kings, founded by Artaxerxes, a Persian; who defeated and slew Artabanus, King of Parthia, in whom ended the Parthian empire, in the year of Christ 223, of the Greeks, or the Seleucidæ, 534, the third of the Emperor Alexander. Maruthas, in the Acts of the Martyrs, with the Persians of his time, computes the years from this epoch: thus, he says, the great persecution was begun in the thirty-first year of King Sapor, and the hundred and seventeenth of the Persian empire, that is, of the reign of the Saxanite, or last dynasty, which held that empire four hundred and eighteen years, till the rise of the Mahommedan kingdom. (Alban Butler.)

† The haughtiness of the King of Persia is manifest from an epistle which he addressed to the Roman Emperor: in that he styles himself the King of Kings, partner with the stars, and brother of the sun and moon. His hatred of the Roman name, as well as of the Christian, led this bitter tyrant to stretch forth his hands to vex the church in not less than three sanguinary persecutions. The first commenced in the eighteenth year of Sapor's reign, the second in his thirtieth, and the third in the thirty-first year; which

however, was neither allured by the promises, nor terrified by the menaces, of the Monarch; and as he could not be drawn from his steadfastness, he was committed to prison, where he was kept until the Monarch's pleasure should be farther known. As Simeon was conducted to prison, he was observed by one Usthazares, an old servant in the family of the King, and a *quondam* tutor of Sapor, but who had renounced the faith of Christ, and rendered an easy compliance with the idolatrous customs of the Heathen. When he saw the venerable Simeon pass by, he saluted him: the pious Bishop at once sharply rebuked the apostate for so cowardly revolting from the profession of the faith, and again returning to the "beggarly elements" of Paganism. The thunderstruck Usthazares burst into tears; and, laying aside the various ornaments of his courtly dress, adopted the habiliments of mourning, and exclaimed, "Alas! woe is me! How shall I hereafter behold the Most High, whom I have so shamefully denied, when Simeon, my old companion and familiar acquaintance, disdains to give me one word, or even to return my salute?"

Intimation of this affair was speedily communicated to Sapor, who, highly incensed at the conduct of his former tutor, asked him what cause he had to grieve, and whether there was anything withheld from him that he could want or desire. Usthazares meekly answered, there was nothing that he wanted which this earth could afford; his grief was of a different nature, on account of which he justly mourned. That, in order to oblige the King of Persia, he had been induced to deny his God, and had, with great dissimulation, worshipped the sun, for which, he said, "I am deserving of a double death; first, for denying the Lord who bought me with his blood, and, secondly, for dissembling with my King." At the same time he solemnly protested that he would not again forsake the Creator of the world, in order to worship the creatures which he had made. Sapor was astonished at this sudden change, and doubted whether it would be best to treat him with lenity or rigour: he at length commanded him to be beheaded. As he went to the place of execution, he desired some respite while he forwarded a messenger to the Monarch, bearing the following intimation; namely, "that Usthazares did not die a traitor for any crime against the King, or the state; but only that, being a Christian, he would not deny his God:" he requested, also, that this declaration might be publicly read at the place of execution. This was highly satisfactory to the martyr, whose chief reason in so doing was, that, as his apostacy from Christ had caused many others to follow his example, these also, being informed that Usthazares died, not for any crime, but solely for the religion of Christ,

last persecution was continued till the close of his reign. Sozomen says, "It would be difficult to relate in detail every circumstance respecting these sufferers, such as their names, their country, the mode of their martyrdom, and the species of torture to which they were subjected. I shall briefly state, that the number of men and women, whose names have been ascertained, and who were martyred during this period, has been computed to be upwards of sixteen thousand; while the multitude of martyrs whose names were unknown was so great, that the Persians, the Syrians, and the inhabitants of Edessa, have failed in all their efforts to compute the number." (Sozom., Hist. Eccles., lib. ii., cap. 14.)

might be induced to return to the church, and become fervent and constant in the faith. The martyr then cheerfully surrendered his neck to the stroke of the executioner, and received his crown. Simeon, who was still in prison, hearing of the heroic conduct of Usthazares, returned thanks to the Most High for the grace of repentance and of courage which he had vouchsafed to his fallen servant, in suffering him to recover from his lapsed state, and to glorify him by his death. On the following day,* the Prelate was again brought before the King, and again refusing to comply with the royal commands to worship the sun after the Persian manner, or to adore the King, the following colloquy is said to have taken place:—"Simeon, what is the result of this night's deliberation? Do you accept of my mercy, or do you persist in disobeying me, and choose death? Adore the sun but once, and never adore it again unless you please. On that condition I promise you all liberty, security, and protection." Simeon replied, "I will never be guilty of such a crime and scandal." The King said, "I call to remembrance our former friendship, on which account I wished you well, and have given you signal proofs of my lenity; but you contemn my benevolence. Impute, therefore, all to yourself." Simeon said, "Flatter me not: why am not I speedily sacrificed? The table is ready prepared for me, and the happy hour of my banquet calls me." The King, turning to his nobles, said, "Behold the wonderful dignity of his countenance, and the venerable majesty of his person. I have seen many countries, but never beheld such a graceful face and such comely limbs. Yet see the madness of the man: he is obstinately bent on dying for his error." To this they all answered, "O King, your wisdom cannot so much admire the beauty of his body, as not to regard more the minds which he has corrupted." The King forthwith commanded him to be beheaded, and he was removed.

At the same time one hundred other Christians were led forth to suffer; among whom were five Bishops, some Priests and Deacons,

* It was in the thirty-first year of Sapor's reign, that he resolved to abolish the Christian name, and decreed that whosoever embraced it should be made a slave. Simeon wrote to him a letter, which manifested a courage which a truly apostolic spirit only could dictate. To the numerous threats of the King against the community to which he belonged, and against himself, he replied, "As Jesus willingly offered himself to death for the whole world, and by dying on the cross redeemed it, why shall I be afraid to lay down my life, with the care of whose salvation I am charged? I desire not to live, unless I may continue unspotted and undefiled. God forbid that I should purchase life at the hazard of those souls for which Jesus died. I am not so slothful as to fear to walk in his steps, to tread the path of his passion, and to share in the communion of his sacrifice. As to your threats against my people, they do not want for courage to die for their salvation." The King, receiving this answer, trembled with wrath, and immediately dictated a decree, commanding all Priests and Deacons to be put to death, the churches to be levelled with the ground, and the sacred vessels to be converted to profane uses. He added, "And let Simeon, the leader of wicked men, who despises my royal majesty, worships only the God of Cæsar, and contemns my divinity, be brought and arraigned before me." The Jews, naturally enemies to the Christians, seeing the circumstances favourable to their malice, said to the King, "If you write, O King, to the Roman Emperor, he will take no notice of your letter; but at a poor line from Simeon he will arise, adore and embrace it with both hands, and command all things contained in it to be instantly put in execution." Simeon was apprehended and bound in chains with two others, Abdhaicla and Hananias, Priests of his church.

and others of the inferior Clergy. As they were led out to execution, the chief of the Magi, or principal Judge, said to them, "If any one of you will adore the sun, the great god, let him step forth, his life shall be granted him." But not one of them accepted life at this rate; all of whom asserted, in language similar to the following, "Our faith in God teaches us to contemn your torments: your swords cannot deprive us of the firm hopes of our resurrection: your pretended deity we will never adore." The officers accordingly applied themselves to the task of slaying these martyrs. Simeon exhorted them to constancy, and reasoned concerning death, the resurrection, and piety, and showed them, from the sacred Scriptures, that a death like this is true life, whereas to live, and through fear to deny God, is truly death. He assured them, also, that even if no one were to slay them, death would inevitably overtake them, as the natural consequence of our birth; and that, after this short and transitory life, an account must be rendered of our actions; after which we enter upon another life, wherein piety receives eternal rewards, and vice is visited with endless punishment. He likewise told them, that the most glorious of good actions is to die for the cause of God. The various martyrs eagerly listened to this discourse of Simeon, and with alacrity went forth to meet their death; after which Simeon also received the stroke of the axe, together also with his two companions, Abdhaicla and Hananias. As the latter was preparing himself for the executioner, by removing or adjusting his garments, he was seized with a violent and altogether involuntary trembling. Pusicius, who had recently been promoted by the King to the office of Superintendent or Prefect of all the artisans employed on the royal works, perceiving the tremor, as the necessary preparations for his death were made, he said to him, "O, old man, close your eyes, and be of good courage; for you will soon behold the light of Christ!" No sooner had he uttered these words than he was arrested, and conducted before the King; and as he frankly avowed himself a Christian, and spoke with great boldness concerning the truth of his religion, and the innocence of the martyrs, he was summarily dealt with. The King having reproached him with ingratitude for the honour lately conferred upon him, Pusicius answered, "I could desire to exchange my life for their death. I renounce this your honour, full of cares and trouble, and beg *their* death, than which nothing can be more happy." Then the Monarch said, "Do you despise your dignity, and prefer death? Are you a madman?" Pusicius replied, "I am a Christian; and, by a most certain hope in God, I prefer their death to your honours." Sapor, being enraged, said to his attendants, "This man must not die by any common death, but by one that is extraordinary and cruel." He therefore commanded that the back of his neck should be cut through into his mouth, and his tongue plucked out by the roots through the wound. This sentence was executed with extreme rigour, and Pusicius expired the same hour: immediately after his daughter, who had devoted herself to a life of celibacy, was arraigned and executed.*

* Sozom., Hist. Eccles., lib. ii., cap. 10, 11.

The following year, on the day on which the passion of Christ was commemorated, and when preparations were being made for the celebration of the festival of his resurrection from the dead, Sapor issued a most cruel edict throughout Persia, condemning to death all those who should confess themselves to be Christians; and it is said, that an immense number of the faithful perished, without any trial or form of judicature. The swords of the furious were everywhere unsheathed. Christians looked upon their slaughter as their glory, and courageously went out to meet it. They had even in this life the advantage of their enemies, who often trembled, or were fatigued, while the persecuted professors of the truth remained unshaken; so that, to adopt the language of Maruthas,* "the cross grew and budded upon rivers of blood, the troops of the saints exulted with joy, and, being refreshed by the sight of that sign, were themselves animated with fresh vigour, and inspired others continually with new courage." From the sixth hour on Good Friday to the second Sunday of Pentecost, the slaughter was continued without interruption. The Magi sought diligently in the cities and villages for those who had concealed themselves; and many voluntarily surrendered, lest they should appear, by their silence, to deny Christ. The report of this edict no sooner reached distant cities, than the Governors threw all the Christians into prisons, to be butchered as soon as the edict arrived; and when it appeared among them, they were either stabbed, or had their throats cut on the spot. Of the Christians who were thus unsparingly sacrificed, many were attached to the palace, among whom was Azadas, who was especially beloved by the King: he was so affected at his death, that he issued another edict, putting a stop to the indiscriminate slaughter of the faithful, and directing that the teachers of religion only should be slain. It was also about this time, that the Queen of Sapor was attacked by a disease, and that Tarbula, the sister of the martyred Simeon the Bishop, a holy virgin, was arrested; likewise her sister, who was a widow, and had abjured a second marriage; also her servant, who, like herself, was devoted to a religious life. The cause of their arrest was the calumny of the Jews,† who reported that they had injured the Queen by their enchantments, in revenge for the death of Simeon. They replied to the accusation by asserting that the law of God allowed no more of enchantment than of idolatry; and then being told that they had done it out of revenge, Tarbula answered, that they had no reason to revenge her brother's death, inasmuch as through it he had obtained eternal life in the kingdom of heaven; revenge was also strictly forbidden by the law of Almighty

* Maruthas, Bishop of Tagrit, in Mesopotamia, compiled the Acts of the Martyrs who suffered in Persia, during the forty years of Sapor's persecution, from A.D. 340 to A.D. 380, part of which collection has been recovered, and published by Stephen Assemannus in 1748.

† "As invalids easily give credit to the most frightful representations, the Queen believed the calumny, and especially because it emanated from the Jews; for she had great confidence in their veracity, and in their attachment for herself: she had embraced their sentiments, and lived in the observance of the Jewish rites." (Sozom., Hist. Eccles., lib. ii., cap. 12.)

God. After this they were remanded to prison. It is said that Tarbula was extremely beautiful, and that one of the Magi, a Judge, having become deeply enamoured of her, he sent some money secretly to her the next day, with a message, that if she would consent to marry him, he would obtain her pardon and liberty of the King. She, it is said, refused the offer with indignation, asserting that she had consecrated her all to Jesus Christ, and that she feared not death, which would open to her the way to her dear brother, and to eternal rest. The other two Judges privately made to her similar proposals, but were rejected in like manner. These "unjust Judges" made forthwith their report to the King, in which they represented the prisoners as guilty of the crime with which they were charged; but Sapor, believing they were innocent, was willing that their lives should be spared, and they restored to liberty, on the condition that they offered sacrifice to the sun. They declared that nothing should ever prevail upon them to give to a creature the honour which is due to God alone. The Magians immediately exclaimed, "They are unworthy to live by whose spells the Queen is wasting in sickness." The Magi were therefore required to assign the punishment by which the party should die: they therefore determined, that out of regard to the Queen's recovery, their bodies should be sawn in two, a part of each should be placed on each side of a road, and that the Queen should pass between them, as a charm which should restore her to health.* Even after this sentence, the admirer of Tarbula found means to let her know, that it was still in her power to prevent her death by consenting to marry him. But she cried out with indignation, "Most impudent of men, how could you again entertain such a dishonest thought? For me courageously to die is to live; but life purchased by baseness is worse than any death." When they were come to the place of execution, each person was tied to two stakes, and with a saw was divided in two; each half, thus separated, was cut into six parts, and these, being thrown into so many baskets, were hung on two forked stakes, placed in the

* There is something difficult in accounting for this sentence upon Tarbula and her companions. There is apparently an allusion to the ancient method of making covenants; from the word *convenio*, signifying an agreement, association, or meeting between two or more parties; for it is impossible that a covenant can be made between an individual and himself, whether God or man. For whatever purpose a covenant was made, it was ever ratified by a sacrifice offered to God; and the passing between the divided parts of the victim appears to have signified that each agreed, if they broke their engagements, to submit to the punishment of being *cut asunder*, which, we find from Matt. xxiv. 51, and Luke xii. 46, was an ancient mode of punishment. This is farther confirmed by Herodotus, who says that Sabachus, King of Ethiopia, had a vision, in which he was ordered *to cut in two* all the Egyptian Priests. We find also, from the same author, that Xerxes ordered one of the sons of Pythius *to be cut in two*, and one half to be placed on each side of the way, that his army might pass through between them. That this kind of punishment was used among the Persians, we have proof from Dan. ii. 5; iii. 29; Story of Susanna, 55, 59. See, further, 2 Sam. xii. 31, and 1 Chron. xx. 3. These authorities may be sufficient to show that the *passing between* the parts of the divided victims, signified the punishment to which those exposed themselves who broke their covenant engagements. That covenant sacrifices were thus *divided* among the Heathen, even from the remotest antiquity, seems to be intimated by Homer, Iliad A., v. 460. But in the paragraph to which we have alluded, the venerable and significant custom seems to have degenerated into a vile and superstitious form.

figure of half crosses, leaving an open path between them, through which the Queen superstitiously passed the same day. Maruthas adds, that no sight could be more shocking or barbarous, than this spectacle of the martyrs' limbs, cruelly mangled and exposed to scorn.

Maruthas closes his history of the persecutions of Sapor with an account of the following martyrs. In an advanced stage of these persecutions another edict was published, commanding the Governors and Magistrates to punish all Christians with racks, scourges, and stoning, and various kinds of death, laying to their charge the following articles:—That they abolish the doctrines of the Magi; they teach men to worship one only God, and forbid them to adore the sun or fire; they use water for profane washing; they forbid persons to marry, to be soldiers in the King's army, or to strike any one; they permit all kinds of animals to be killed, and they suffer the dead to be buried; they say, that serpents and scorpions were made, not by the devil, but by God himself. Acepsimas, Bishop of Honita, in Assyria, a man above fourscore years old, but of a vigorous and strong constitution of body, was apprehended, and conducted in chains to Arbela, before the Governor. The Judges wondered how he could deny the divinity of the sun, which all the East adored. The martyr answered him by expressing his astonishment how men could prefer a creature to the Creator. By the orders of the Governor, he was laid on the ground, with his feet bound, and in that posture barbarously scourged, till his whole body was covered with blood, after which he was thrown into prison. In the mean time, one Joseph, a Presbyter of Bethcatuba, and Aithalas, a Deacon of Bethnudra, celebrated for eloquence, sanctity, and learning, were brought before the same Governor. To his interrogatories Joseph answered, that he was a Christian, and had always taught that the sun was an inanimate creature. He was then stretched on the ground, and beaten by ten executioners, who succeeded one another, till his body seemed one continued wound. At the sight of himself in this condition, the martyr said, "I return thanks, that Christ, the Son of God, has granted me this mercy, and washed me with this second baptism of my blood." His courage the persecutors termed an insult, and renewed, with redoubled fury, their attempts to torture and maltreat him. After he was loosened, he was laden with heavy chains, and thrown into the same dungeon with Acepsimas; and Aithalas was introduced, to whom the Governor said, "Adore the sun, which is a divinity; eat blood, marry, and obey the King; and you shall live." The martyr answered, "It is better to die, and then live eternally." By the command of the Judge, his hands were tied under his knees, and his body fastened to a beam, when, by extreme pressure, and various contortions, his bones were in many places either dislocated or fractured, and his flesh was lacerated: he was afterwards scourged; and then, on the shoulders of the attendants, conveyed to prison. On the following day, all the three martyrs were again brought forth, stretched on the ground, bound fast with cords, their legs, thighs, and ribs so tortured and strained by stakes, that the noise of their bones break-

ing is said to have filled the place with horror.* Yet to every solicitation of the Judge or officers their answer invariably was, "We trust in one God, and will not obey the King's edicts." Scarcely a day passed, in which some new torture was not invented and exercised upon them.

After they had for three years endured the hardship of imprisonment and daily torture, the King taking a journey into Media, the martyrs were brought before Adarsapor, the chief of the Governors of the East, other Satraps, and various official characters, sitting with him in the palace. The victims of persecution were unable to walk, and scarce retained the appearance of human creatures. The sight of such spectacles affected those who were present to compassion, and many even to tears. They, without any appearance of fear, again professed their attachment to Christianity, and declared that they

* This mode of torture appears to have been peculiar to the country, and in some degree synonymous with the punishment of the bastinado, though inflicted with much greater severity. A short account of this mode of torture is given by Mr. Antes. On the 15th of November, 1779, Mr. Antes was returning from a short country excursion, to Grand Cairo: he was seized by some of the attendants of Osman Bey, a Mameluke Chief; and, after stripping him of his clothes, they demanded money, which he not having about him, they dragged him before the Bey, telling him that he was a European, from whom he might get something. In order to extort money from him, the Bey ordered him to be bastinadoed: they first threw him down flat on his face, and then bent up his legs, so that the soles of his feet were horizontal; they then brought a strong staff, about six feet long, with an iron chain fixed to it at both ends. This chain they threw round both feet above the ankles, and twisted them together; and two fellows on each side, provided with what they call a *corbage*, held up the soles of the feet by means of the stick. When thus placed, an officer whispered in his ear, "Do not suffer yourself to be beaten: give him a thousand dollars, and he will let you go." Mr. Antes, not willing to give up the money which he had received for the goods of other merchants, refused: the two men then began to beat the soles of his feet, at first, moderately; but when a second application for money was refused, and then the demand was two thousand dollars, they began to lay on more roughly, and every stroke felt like the application of a red-hot poker. Finding they could get no money, supposing he might have some choice goods, a third application was made to him by the officer. He told them, he had a fine silver-mounted blunderbuss at his lodging, which he would give. The Bey asked what he offered. The officer sneered, and said, *Bir carabina;* that is, "One blunderbuss." On which the Bey said, *Ettrup il kulp*, "Beat the dog." Then they began to lay on with all their might. "At first," says Mr. Antes, "the pain was excruciating; but, after some time, my feeling grew numb, and it was like beating a bag of wool." Finding that nothing was to be got from him, and knowing that he had done nothing to deserve punishment, the Bey ordered them to let him go. One of the attendants anointed his feet, and bound them up with some rags, put him on an ass, and conducted him to his house in Cairo, and laid him on his bed, where he was confined for six weeks, before he could walk even with crutches; and for more than three years his feet and ankles were very much swollen; and though twenty years had elapsed when he published this account, his feet and ankles were so affected, that, on any strong exertion, they were still accustomed to swell. He mentions instances of the bastinado having been applied for three days successively; and, if the person survived, the feet were rendered useless for life; but, in general, he observes, when they have received between five and six hundred strokes, the blood gushes from the mouth and nose, and they die either under or soon after the operation. How he felt his mind affected on this distressing occasion, he thus piously describes:—"I at once gave up myself for lost, well knowing that my life depended upon the caprice of a brute in human shape; and having heard and seen such examples of unrelenting cruelty, I could not expect to fare better than others had done before me. I had therefore nothing left, but to cast myself on the mercy of God, commending my soul to him: and, indeed, I must in gratitude confess, that I experienced his support most powerfully; so that all fear of death was taken from me; and, if I could have bought my life for one halfpenny, I should, I believe, have hesitated to accept the offer." (Observations on the Manners, &c., of the Egyptians, by J. Antes, Esq., p. 146, 12mo., Dublin, 1801.)

would not abandon the faith. Adarsapor said, that he saw, by their wounds, what they had already suffered, and used both threats and entreaties to induce them to comply with the law. They requested him to hasten the execution of his threatenings: he, however, assured them, that "death delivers criminals from pain; although I," said he, "will render life to you as grievous as a continued death, that others of your sect may tremble." To these words Acepsimas replied, "In vain do you threaten. God, in whom we trust, will give us courage and constancy." At this answer, fury flashed in the eyes of Adarsapor; and he swore, by the fortune of the King, that if they did not at that instant obey the regal edicts, he would sprinkle their grey hairs with their blood, destroy their bodies, and cause their remains to be ground to powder. Acepsimas said, "To you we resign our bodies, and commend to God our souls. Execute what you threaten: it is what we desire." The tyrant, with rage painted in every feature of his countenance, ordered the venerable old man to be stretched on the ground; and thirty men, fifteen on each side, were directed to pull and haul the sufferer by cords tied to his arms and legs, so as to dislocate and almost tear his limbs asunder;* two common executioners, in the mean time, were cruelly to scourge his body, and to mangle and tear off the flesh in several places: under this torture the martyr expired. His remains were watched by guards appointed for that purpose; till, after three days, they were removed by the Christians, and interred, by the care of a daughter of the King of Armenia, who was at that time a hostage in Media.

Joseph and Aithalas underwent similar treatment, but came alive out of the hands of the tormentors. The latter said to the Judge, while under his torments, "Your inflictions are too mild: increase them as you please." Adarsapor was struck with astonishment at their fortitude, and observed to those that were around him, "These men are greedy of torments, as though they were a banquet; and long for a kingdom that is invisible." He then caused them to be tortured afresh: every part of the body was mangled anew, and the joints of their shoulders and arms were dislocated. Adarsapor gave an order, that if they did not expire under their torments, they should be taken back to their own country, and there put to death.† The

* Alban Butler, Lives of the Fathers, Martyrs, Saints, &c., Mar. 14.

† Maruthas was the recorder of the acts of these Persian martyrs, whose writings were published by Asseman, in his "Acta Mart. Orient." With regard to the martyrdom of Aithalas, he informs us, that angels were heard singing at the place of his execution, and many miracles wrought. The industrious, but fearfully superstitious, Alban Butler adopts this passage without explanation, or reservation on the point of authenticity and genuineness. These Acts or Passions of the martyrs, when they were carefully taken and preserved genuine, without corruption, were commonly read in the church upon the anniversary commemoration and proper festival of the martyr. The third Council of Carthage, which forbids all other books to be read in the church besides the canonical Scriptures, excepts the Passions of the martyrs, (Con. Carth. iii., can. 47: "Liceat legi Passiones martyrum, cum anniversarii eorum dies celebrantur,") as books that might be read on their anniversary day's commemoration. Augustine, Pope Leo, and Gelasius often mention the reading of such histories in the African and Roman churches. Cæsarius Arelatensis, Alcimus Avitus, and Ferreolus speak of the same in the French churches. And some think, not improbably, that such sort of histories and Passions of the martyrs had particularly the name of *legendæ*, "legends;" upon this account,

two martyrs, not being able to sit, were tied on the backs of beasts, and in extreme pain were conveyed to Arbela, the guard treating them by the way with unparalleled barbarity. Jazdundocta, an illustrious lady of the city, for a large sum of money, obtained leave of the Governor, that the sufferers should be conducted to her house, in order to take some refreshment. She was a Christian, and bathed and dressed their wounds, and was greatly encouraged by their exhortations and their faith. The martyrs were shortly conveyed from this lady's house to prison, where they languished six months longer. A new Governor at length came into that province, who is reported to have been the most savage of men, bringing an edict of the King, commanding that Christians who were condemned to death should be stoned by those who professed the same religion. The intelligence of his arrival drove the Christians into the woods and deserts, that they might not be compelled to imbrue their hands in the blood of any pertaining to the "noble army of martyrs." The brutal soldiery hunted them like beasts of the earth, and many were captured. The two confessors were brought before the new Judge. Joseph was hung up by the toes, and scourged during two hours, in the presence of the Governor, who, his victim referring to the day of the resurrection in some words which escaped from his lips, asked, "In that resurrection, how do you intend to punish me?" The martyr replied, "We are taught meekness, to return good for evil, and to pray for enemies." "Well," said the Judge, "then I shall meet with kindness from your hands for the evil which you here receive from me." To which the martyr answered, "There will be then no room for pardon or favour; nor will one be able to help the other. I will pray that God will bring you to a knowledge of himself in this life." The Judge responded, "Consider these things in the next world, whither I am going to send you: at present, obey the King." The old man answered, "Death is our desire." The Governor then began to interrogate Aithalas, and afterwards caused him to be hung up by the heels for a long time. He was at

because they were used to be read in the church on the festivals of the martyrs: but the fabulous writers of lives, such as the author of the Golden Legend, and other Monkish impostors, have since written the lives of saints and martyrs in such a scandalous manner as to alter the signification of a good old word, and make a legend pass for a romantic fiction, and mere imposture. Of which learned men even in the Romish Church, such as Ludovicus Vives, and Melchior Canus, and Papebrochius, (Papebroch. Conat. Histor. Chronol., p. 43,) and Pagi, (Pagi, Crit. in Baron. A.D. 302, § 18, 19,) have made frequent and just complaints; confessing, that even their Breviaries and Passionals are often filled with such monstrous fables as would make a wise man blush to hear or read them in the public offices of the church, and which they desire heartily to see perfectly reformed. Particularly Pagi exposes the fiction of Ursula, (Pagi, Crit. in Baron. A.D. 383, § 3,) and her eleven thousand companions, all virgins, said to be martyred at Cologne at one time under Cyricius, a Pope that never was in being; and he tells us the Roman Martyrology and Breviary have dropped the number as an incredible fiction; as also did the Cologne editors, and the school of the Sorbonne, retaining the name of Ursula, but being ashamed of her eleven thousand companions, notwithstanding that Hermannus Crombak wrote a large volume, called Ursula Vindicata, to defend this monstrous fable. It were easy to give many other such instances; but this one is sufficient to show the difference between the modern Passionals, and the simplicity of those of the ancient church, the reading of which was one part of their solemn exercise upon these festivals. (Bingham, Antiquities of the Christian Church, book xx., chap. vii., § 5, vol. vii., p. 109. Edit. 8vo., 1834.)

length taken down; and, in order to move him to obey the iniquitous mandate, he was shown a certain Manichæan, who had renounced his religion for fear of persecution, and was engaged in killing ants, which that sect held to be unlawful, teaching that insects and beasts have rational souls. Aithalas was then stretched on the ground, and scourged until he fell into a swoon, and then was thrown on one side, like a dog. A certain Magian, out of pity, threw a coat over his wounds, to cover them; for which act of kindness he received two hundred lashes. Thamsapor, a superior officer in the country, arriving at his place of residence, the Judge caused the martyrs to be carried before him. They were ordered to eat the blood of beasts, which they refused to do. One told them, that if they ate the juice of red grapes curdled, which the people might think to be blood, it would satisfy the Judges. They answered, "God forbid that we should dissemble our faith." Thamsapor and the Governor, after a short consultation, condemned both to be stoned to death by Christians. Joseph was executed at Arbela. He was put into the ground up to the neck, and the soldiers had gathered together five hundred Christians to witness his execution. That noble lady, Jazdundocta, was also brought with them, and earnestly besought to throw something, if it were only a feather, at the martyr, that she might seem to obey the order of the King. But she resolutely resisted their entreaties and their threats, desiring to die with the servant of God. Many, however, complied with the mandate, through weakness; and a shower of stones fell upon the martyr, under which he expired. A guard was set to watch his remains; but the Christians found means to steal them away during a tempestuous evening which followed. Aithalas was martyred in the province of Bethnuhadra: the Governor of the country, having recently apostatized from the faith, basely became one of his murderers. Sozomen informs us, that subsequently a multitude of Presbyters, Deacons, various other Ministers of the church, and numerous labourers in the word and doctrine, terminated their lives by martyrdom. One Dausas, who had been made a prisoner by the Persians, and brought from a place named Zabdæus, died about this time also, in defence of the Christian faith; with whom must be associated Mareabdes Chorepiscopus,* and about two hundred and fifty of his Clergy, who having also been captured by the Persians, suffered.

* When churches were raised up in the neighbourhood of cities, the appointment of *Chorepiscopi*, or country Bishops, and of Visiting-Presbyters, both acting under the presbytery of the city, with its Bishop at its head, is sufficiently in proof that the ancient churches, especially the larger and more prosperous of them, existed in that form which, in modern times, we should call a religious connexion, subject to a common government. This appears to have arisen out of the very circumstance of the increase of the church, through the zeal of the first Christians; and in the absence of all direction by the Apostles, that every new society of believers raised should be formed into an independent church, it was doubtless much more in the spirit of the very first discipline exercised by the Apostles and Evangelists, (when none of the churches were independent, but remained under the government of those who had been chiefly instrumental in raising them up,) to place them under a common inspection, and to unite the weak with the strong, and the newly converted with those who were "in Christ before them." There was also in this greater security afforded, both for the continuance of wholesome doctrine and godly discipline. (Watson, Theolog. Institutes, Works, vol. xii., p. 156.)

We shall conclude our brief account of the Persian martyrs by giving a statement of the sufferings of Bardemus,* a native of Bethlepat, a small town on the frontiers of Mesopotamia, then in the hands of the Persians. He was educated in the principles of the Christian religion, and quitted the world, and all hope of advancement in it, to embrace a retired life, which custom had recently been introduced into Persia. It had long been practised in Armenia, where it commenced shortly after the introduction of the Gospel into that country. In the execution of this design, Bardemus distributed the greater part of his property to the poor; and with the rest, it is said, he erected a religious house, which he endowed; and, being accompanied by others actuated by principles similar to his own, he presided over them with mildness and affability, and lived in the practice of the religion of Christ. In the persecution which Sapor had raised against the church, Bardemus and seven of his companions were seized, and sent to prison. The former was treated with much less mercy than his associates, being regarded as their leader and chief: he was severely scourged every day, and endured a variety of afflictions during an imprisonment of four months; nothing, however, could depress his fortitude, or disturb his confidence in God, whose promises were the song of his rejoicing in every circumstance and place. Narses, a man of considerable rank, and Governor of Aria, was in the prison at the same time, and for the same cause: he had been solicited to pay divine honours to the sun; and, upon refusing, had been treated with great severity. Wearied out with the miseries he endured, he unhappily exchanged the reward of perseverance for the deceitful and transitory joys of the present life, and intimated to the Emperor his disposition to obey his orders. The Prince, pleased with his change of mind, and willingness to submit to his decree, sent two officers of the court to inform him, that if he would regain his liberty, and recover his estate, he must convince them of his sincerity by becoming the executioner of Bardemus. Like Demas of old, Narses was determined to purchase his ease at any rate: he embraced the proposal, and was conveyed to the palace, attended by the martyr in irons. He drew his sword, and prepared to execute his office; but his hand trembled, and he was seized with terror, which left in him no power of motion. Bardemus, observing his condition, manifested pity and compassion for his apostate executioner, and, thinking this a favourable opportunity for restoring him to the profession of the faith he had renounced, endeavoured to show him the enormity of his

* About this period Milles suffered martyrdom. He originally served the Persians in a military capacity, but afterwards abandoned that vocation, in order to embrace the apostolical mode of life. It is related, that he was ordained Bishop over a Persian city, where he underwent a variety of sufferings; and that, failing in his efforts to convert the inhabitants to Christianity, he uttered imprecations against the city, and departed. Not long after, some of the principal citizens incurred the anger of the King, and an army, with three hundred elephants, was sent against them; the city was utterly demolished, and corn was sown on its site. Milles, taking with him nothing but the holy book of the Gospels, repaired to Jerusalem to worship; thence he proceeded to Egypt, in order to see the Monks. The extraordinary and admirable works which he accomplished are attested by the Syrians, who have written an account of his life and actions. (Sozom., Hist. Eccles., lib. ii., cap. 14.)

crime, and the severity of the judgments of the Almighty at the last day. But that unhappy man had lost his faith, and was abandoned to his own corrupt and perverse inclinations as a punishment for his apostacy, his heart was hardened, and his conscience seared. As soon as he was somewhat recovered, he proceeded to the task on which his liberty and fortune were made to depend, but performed it in such a manner as showed a mixture of fear, confusion, and respect for the individual he was about to slay. He gave him several blows, but inflicted them with so little judgment and precision, that he had a slow and lingering martyrdom, which he endured with all that tranquillity which the hopes of glory inspire. Narses received the promised reward, "the price of blood." He did not long enjoy the fruit of his shameless conduct. The hand of God was upon him, even of Him who had said, "Touch not mine anointed, and do my Prophets no harm." Soon after the death of Bardemus, he fell into disgrace with his Prince, and came to a miserable end.

From what we have stated with regard to the persecutions in Persia, the great object of Sapor was the utter and complete destruction of the Christian name throughout his dominions. The futility of such schemes is obvious, especially when we take into the account the great persecutions of the Christians by the Roman Emperors. When the number of the faithful, to adopt the sentiments of a modern writer,* who were put to death in each of those persecutions is considered, the only wonder is that there were any left, either to suffer for the Gospel, or to publish it abroad through the world. Some idea of the numbers slain may be learned from the nature of those persecutions. In the tenth, so called, under Diocletian, in 303, that Emperor in his edict commanded all the churches to be demolished, and the Christians to be deprived of their sacred writings, and of all civil privileges; another edict commanded the imprisonment of all Bishops and Ministers of the Gospel; a third, that the most exquisite tortures should be employed to constrain them to apostatize; a fourth enjoined that the Magistrates use the severest tortures on all Christians, without regard to sex or age, for the purpose of forcing them to renounce the religion of Christ. One historian says, that twenty thousand Christians were burnt by Diocletian's orders on one Christmas-day; and yet those bloody edicts extended over all the Roman empire, except Gaul, and were executed with such zeal, that pillars were erected in honour of this bloody Emperor, for having everywhere abolished the superstition of Christ. Vain boast! Everywhere abolished Christianity! And yet, in twenty-five years from this time, when Constantine swayed the sceptre, we are told the Christians were numerous both at Rome and in the provinces. So true it is, that the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the church, or, as Tertullian expresses it in his Apology, "The more you mow us down, the thicker we rise: the Christian blood you spill, is like the seed you sow; it springs from the earth again, and fructifies the more." How true it is that our whole inheritance of liberty and blessing is the price of blood! Not

* Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine, vol. iv., p. 420, fourth series, abridged edition, Mason, 1848.

only our national independence, and our rich civil privileges, but our rights of conscience, all our religious privileges, from our Saviour's crucifixion down to the present time, have been the price of blood. What a boon of blessings have our predecessors bequeathed unto us! A review of their sufferings should impress us with gratitude for the more auspicious times in which our lot is fallen, and awaken in us a quenchless desire to make the best possible improvement of our patrimony.

While Christianity appeared to make rapid progress towards the subjugation of the world to its influence, the world was making fearful reprisals on Christianity. By enlisting new passions and interests in its cause, religion surrendered itself to an inseparable fellowship with those passions and interests. The more it mingles with the tide of human affairs, the more turbid becomes the stream of Christian history. In the intoxication of power, the Christian, like ordinary men, forgot his original character; and the religion of the Saviour, instead of diffusing peace and happiness through society, might, to the superficial observer of human affairs, seem introduced only as a new element of discord and misery into the community of man. The first act of the new reign was the murder of the nephews of the deceased Sovereign. This act, indeed, was that of a ferocious soldiery, though the memory of Constantius is not free from the suspicion, at least, of connivance in that bloody deed. Christianity appears only in a favourable light, as interposing between the assassins and their victim. Marcus, Bishop of Arethusa, saved Julian from his enemies: the future apostate was concealed under the altar of the church. Yet, on the accession of the sons of Constantine, to the causes of fraternal animosity, usual on the division of a kingdom between several brothers, was added that of religious hostility. The two Emperors, for they were speedily reduced to two, placed themselves at the head of the two contending parties in Christianity. The weak and voluptuous Constans adhered with inflexible firmness to the cause of Athanasius; the no less weak and tyrannical Constantius to that of Arianism. The East was arrayed against the West. At Rome, at Alexandria, at Sardica, and, afterwards, at Arles and Milan, Athanasius was triumphantly acquitted; at Antioch, at Philippopolis, and, finally, at Rimini, he was condemned with almost equal unanimity. Even within the church itself, the distribution of the superior dignities became an object of fatal ambition and strife. The streets of Alexandria and Constantinople were deluged with blood by the partisans of rival Bishops. In the latter an officer of high distinction, sent by the Emperor to quell the tumult, was slain, and his body treated with the utmost indignity by the infuriated populace.*

It was about the year 340 that Eusebius, Bishop of Cæsarea, died. He had been a dangerous man in the church. He was, in the most obnoxious sense, a courtly Prelate; he associated with Arius, and joined in the condemnation of Athanasius. Milner observes, that it gives pain to part on such terms with the historian to whom we are indebted for the preservation of so many valuable monuments of anti-

* Milman, History of Christianity, vol. iii., p. 2.

quity; but truth must be spoken, and his case is one of the many which show that learning and philosophy, unless duly subordinate to the revealed will of God, are no friends to Christian simplicity.* Alexander, Bishop of Constantinople, died also about the same period, and Paul obtained the see. The followers of Arius and Macedonius assert that he took possession of this office without the concurrence of Eusebius, Bishop of Nicomedia, or of Theodore, Bishop of Heraclea in Thrace, upon whom, as being the nearest Bishops, the right of conferring ordination devolved. Many, however, maintain, on the testimony of Alexander, whom he succeeded, that he was ordained by the Bishops who were then assembled at Constantinople. For when Alexander, who was eighty-nine years of age, and who had held the episcopal office for twenty-three years, was at the point of death, his Clergy asked him whom he wished to succeed him in the government of his church. "If," replied he, "you seek a good man, and one who is apt to teach, you have Paul; but if you desire one who is conversant with public affairs, and able to confer with rulers, Macedonius is, in these respects, more qualified than Paul." The Macedonians themselves admit that this testimony was given by Alexander; but they say that Paul was the more skilled of the two in the transaction of business, and the art of eloquence, and that Macedonius was celebrated on account of the purity of his life and conduct; and they accuse Paul of having been addicted to luxury and licentiousness. It appears, however, from their own acknowledgment, that Paul was a man of great eloquence, and highly renowned on account of his skill in teaching the church. Events proved that he was not competent to combat the casualties of life, or to hold intercourse with those in power. He was never successful in subverting the machinations of his enemies, like those who are accustomed to the management of such affairs. Although the people were much attached to him, he suffered severely from the artifices of those who rejected the doctrines acknowledged by the Council of Nice. In the first place he was expelled from the church of Constantinople, as if some accusation had been established against him. He was then sent into banishment; and finally, it is said, fell a victim to the devices of his enemies, and was strangled.† These events transpired at some subsequent period. The election of Paul was far from being grateful to Constantius, who summoned a Council of Arians, and dictated its decisions. Paul was ejected from the see, and Eusebius of Nicomedia sprung into the vacant seat; and from that time Constantinople continued under an Arian episcopacy forty years. The ancient usages in choosing Bishops were altered, and a precedent was set of vesting in the hands of Princes the government of the church in capital cities. A Council of a hundred Bishops of Egypt, with Athanasius at their head, protested against these proceedings to the whole Christian world.‡

"Wars and rumours of wars" were still the fate of the church. The recent ordination of Paul occasioned great commotion. The adherents

* Milner, Hist. of the Church, cent. iv., chap. 4, vol. i., p. 538.
† Sozom., Hist. Eccles., lib. iii., cap. 3.
‡ Milner, Hist. of the Church, cent. iv., chap. 4, vol. i., p. 538.

of Arius desired that Macedonius* should be installed, an individual whose heterodoxy was far from being doubtful. In this, however, his friends failed; but a Council was immediately convened at Antioch, which was supported by the presence of the Emperor, and by the artifices of Eusebius of Nicomedia; Athanasius was deposed, and Gregory of Cappadocia was ordained in his place. The Council prevailed on Constantius to direct Philagrius, the Prefect of Egypt, to support their proceedings with an armed force. Violence was thus found necessary to support iniquity, and an Arian Prince was obliged to tread in the steps of his pagan predecessors to support what he called the church. The views of Gregory were promoted with vigour. Virgins and Monks were cruelly treated at Alexandria. Jews and Pagans were encouraged to murder Christians. Gregory himself entered the church with the Governor and certain Pagans, and caused a number of the friends of Athanasius to be scourged and imprisoned. The persecuted Prelate himself, who wanted not courage and capacity to resist, acted, however, a much more Christian part. He fled before the storm, and took refuge in Rome. This was a memorable season for the church of Christ, who now found her livery to be that of persecution, even when Pagans had ceased to reign. Gregory would not suffer the Athanasians, who, in great numbers, still refused to own the Arian domination, even to pray in their own houses. The greatest severities were inflicted on those Bishops who had been zealous for the Nicene faith, though the decrees of the Council had never been reversed, and the Arians as yet contented themselves with ambiguous confessions, and the omission of the term "consubstantial." Bishops were scourged, and put in irons. Potamo was beaten on the neck till he was thought to have expired: he recovered in a small degree, but died shortly after. His crime, in the eyes of the Arians, was, doubtless, an unvaried attachment to the Nicene faith. Mr. Milner, the historian, observes, that "while Gregory dealt in violence, his competitor used only the more Christian arms of argument. He published an epistle to the Christian world, exhorting all the Christians to unite on this occasion.† 'The faith,' said he, 'is not now begun, it came to us from the Lord through his disciples. Lest what has been preserved in the churches until now, perish in our days, and we be called to account for our stewardship, exert yourselves, my brethren, as stewards of the mysteries of God, and as beholding your rights taken away by strangers.' He goes on to inform them of the proceedings of the Arians, observing that the like had not happened in the church since the ascension of our Saviour. It was not right that a decided Arian, nor one who was inclined to such sentiments, should have been chosen; but, according to the canons of the church, and the word of the Apostle Paul, the people

* The Macedonians were the followers of this Macedonius, Bishop of Constantinople, who, through the influence of the Eunomians, was deposed in the Council of Constantinople in 360, and sent into exile. He considered the Holy Ghost as a divine energy diffused throughout the universe, and not as a person distinct from the Father and the Son. The sect of the Macedonians was crushed before it had arrived at its full maturity, by the Council assembled by Theodosius, in 381, at Constantinople.

† Athanasii Opera, Epist. ad Orthodox., tom. i., p. 439.

being gathered together, and the Spirit of the Holy One, who, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, appoints Bishops, all things should have been examined into, and done regularly in the presence of the people who make the application, and of the Clergy. A stranger put forth by the Arians should not, as if making gain of the office, intrude himself by force, and the authority of secular Magistrates, upon those who have not asked for him, and who neither wish for him, nor were at all cognizant of the proceedings that had taken place. Athanasius begs the Bishops, that, if there were any complaints against him, not to receive the letters of Gregory, but to tear them, and treat the bearers with disdain, as ministers of iniquity. It cannot be denied that his arguments were sound, and that his cause was just. The Arians must bear the infamy of being the first who secularized the discipline of the Christian church. But in adding the close of the letter, I mean," says Milner, "the reader to remark the decline of the Gospel at this time. As on the one hand it were very unfair to confound the Athanasians and the Arians as on an equal footing in point of piety and morality, when the superiority of the former is too evident to admit of a dispute ; so, on the other hand, it is certain, that the experimental use of the divinity of Christ by no means employed an equal degree of the zeal of its patrons with the abstract doctrine itself. Hence Athanasius, though always firm and constantly severe, fails in meekness and charity." *

Soon after the liberation of Athanasius, Eusebius, the Bishop of Constantinople, died, in whom human depravity, under the cloak of sanctity, had attained an unenviable maturity. His thirst for secular ambition and his love of the world, had rendered him one of the most notorious characters of the age. A double election to the vacant see took place, that of Paul and Macedonius. Hermogenes, Master of the Militia, was ordered by the Emperor to banish Paul.† He did so ; and the friends of Paul, being exasperated by a series of persecutions, forgot the character of Christians, and killed Hermogenes. In 347, for the purpose of composing some of those terrific divisions which had now for a long time devastated the church, a Council was held at Sardica by order of the two Emperors, Constantius and Constans, the latter being as steady in the support of the Nicene faith as the former was in opposition.‡ Sardica was in

* Milner, History of the Church, cent. iv., chap. 4, vol. i., p. 540.

† The ordination of Paul created a great commotion in the church of Constantinople. During the life of Alexander the Arians did not venture to excite any insurrection, for the people were implicitly obedient to their Bishop, and attached to his sway ; and, moreover, regarded the extraordinary and unexpected death of Arius as a manifest indication of divine wrath, drawn down upon him, so to speak, by the prayers and virtues of Alexander. After the death of this Bishop, however, the people became divided into two parties, and disputes and contests concerning doctrines were openly carried on. The Arians desired the ordination of Macedonius, while those who maintained that the Son is consubstantial with the Father wished to have Paul as their Bishop ; and this latter party prevailed. After the ordination of Paul, the Emperor returned to Constantinople, and manifested as much displeasure at what had taken place as if Paul had been unworthy of the bishopric. Through the machinations of the enemies of Paul, a Synod was convened, and he was expelled from the church. Eusebius, Bishop of Nicomedia, was installed in the bishopric of Constantinople. (Sozomen.)

‡ Theodoret., Hist. Eccles., lib. ii., cap. 7, 8 ; Socrat., Hist. Eccles., lib. ii., cap. 20 ; Sozom., lib. iii., cap. 11, 12.

Illyria, the border of the dominions of each. The intention of the Council was evidently to unite; but it actually separated the two parties more than ever. Prayer and devout aspirations of the soul were but little known, and the glad tidings of the Gospel were but seldom heard. Peaceable spirits became absorbed in superstition, and the turbulent in ecclesiastical contentions. The life and power of godliness was well-nigh extinct. The Easterns, finding that it was not likely to be a free Council, departed from it, leaving the Westerns to settle matters as they pleased. Hosius of Cordova,* the venerable President of Nice, presided here also, and the Athanasian cause was decided in favour of the Alexandrian Prelate. The Easterns seceded from Sardica, and assembled at Philippopolis, in Thrace, and excommunicated their brethren of the West. In Asia and Egypt the friends of the Nicene faith were treated with great cruelty; but into Europe the subtleties of this contention had not entered: men were there more simple, and followed the primitive faith in quietness and peace.

The Western Council at Milan, A.D. 347, accepted and ratified the decrees of the Council of Sardica, absolving Athanasius of all criminality, and receiving his doctrines as the genuine and exclusive truths of the Gospel. What else passed is not certain; but it is supposed that Photinus, Bishop of Sirmium, was called upon in this Council to give account of his faith: he was condemned and denounced as a heretic for denying the divinity of our Lord, and declaring that he was a mere man. Sentence of deposition was passed upon him, which for a long time could not be executed, owing to the great affection which his people had towards him. It is also believed that Ursaces and Valens, Arian Bishops, in this Council pretended, in a written document, to recant; and, according to Hilary, were united to the church.† On a sudden, however, affairs took a different turn. Constantius threw himself, as it were, at the feet of Athanasius, and, in three successive letters, entreated him to resume his episcopal seat. The Emperor and the Prelate met at Antioch, with mutual expressions of respect and cordiality.‡ Constantius commanded all the accusations against Athanasius to be erased from the registers of the city. He commended the Prelate to the people of Alexandria in

* Athanasius and the other accused parties were introduced to prove their innocence, and the conduct of the Eusebians was put in its true light. The complaints urged on all sides against them were examined: the most important was that which charged them with communicating with the Arians who had been condemned at Nicea. The charge brought against Athanasius of having caused the death of Arsenius, was best refuted by the proof that he still lived; and he is even by some said to have been actually present in the Council. The falsehood of the story of the broken chalice was as easily proved by the testimony of various witnesses from Alexandria, and by that of eighty Egyptian Bishops in their Letter to Julius, the Bishop of Rome. The issue of the examination was, that the Fathers confirmed Athanasius in the communion of the church. They also declared to be innocent four Alexandrian Priests, whom the Eusebians had compelled to flee for their lives. (Landon's Councils.)

† Pagi ad Baron., A.D. 345, note v.; Labbe, Concil., tom. ii., col. 720.

‡ The Emperor proposed to Athanasius to leave one church to the Arians at Alexandria: Athanasius dexterously eluded the request by very fairly demanding, that one church in Antioch, where the Arians predominated, should be set apart for those of his communion.

terms of courtly flattery, which harshly contrast with his former, as well as with his subsequent, conduct to Athanasius. The Arian Bishop, Gregory, was dead, and Athanasius, amid the universal joy, re-entered the city. The Bishops crowded from all parts to salute and congratulate the Prelate, who had thus triumphed over the malice even of imperial enemies. The city was brilliantly illuminated; alms were lavished on the poor; every house resounded with prayer and thanksgiving, as if it were a church; the triumph of Athanasius was completed by the recantation of Ursaces and Valens, two of his most powerful antagonists. The sudden change in the policy of Constantius has been ascribed to the detection of an infamous conspiracy against one of the Western Bishops on a mission to Constantius. The aged Prelate was charged with incontinence, but the accusation was proved to be false. A man of infamous character, Onager, "the wild ass," the chief conductor of the plot, on being detected, avowed himself the agent of Stephen, the Arian Bishop of Antioch. Stephen was ignominiously deposed from his see. Constantius was about to be engaged in the Persian war: at this dangerous crisis, the admonitions of his brother, not unmingled with warlike menace, might enforce the expediency at least of a temporary reconciliation with Athanasius. The political troubles of three years suspended the religious strife. The war with Persia brought fame to the arms of Constantius. The flame of civil war, however, was by no means extinguished. The pride assumed by Constans from the success of his arms, was rendered more contemptible by his want of abilities and application. The chosen bands of Jovians and Herculeans, who acknowledged Magnentius as their leader, maintained the most respectable and important station in the imperial camp. They laid their scheme both deeply and extensively, and endeavoured to convince the soldiery, that the republic summoned them to break the bonds of hereditary servitude. A splendid entertainment was provided. The intemperance of the feast was protracted until a late hour of the night. On a sudden the doors were thrown open, and Magnentius, who had retired for a few moments, returned into the apartment, invested with the diadem and purple. The surprise, the terror, the intoxication, the ambitious hopes, and the mutual ignorance, of the rest of the assembly, prompted them to join their voices to the general acclamation. The guards hastened to take the oath of fidelity, and before the dawn of day Magnentius became master of the troops and treasure of the palace and city of Autun. By his secrecy and diligence, he entertained some hopes of surprising the person of Constans, who was pursuing, in the adjacent forest, his favourite amusement of hunting. The rapid progress of fame allowed him, however, an instant for flight, though the desertion of his soldiers and subjects deprived him of the power of resistance. Before he could reach a sea-port in Spain, where he intended to embark, he was overtaken near Helena, at the foot of the Pyrenees, by a party of light cavalry, whose chief, regardless of the sanctity of a temple, executed his commission by the murder of the son of Constantine. Magnentius, not satisfied with the success of his sanguinary enterprise, meditated the

demolition of the sway of Constantius. With him, however, the Emperor refused to treat. The Deputies from Magnentius were instructed to soothe the resentment and to alarm the fears of Constantius, and also to offer an alliance by a kind of double marriage; namely, an union of Constantius with the daughter of Magnentius, and of Magnentius himself with the ambitious Constantina, and to acknowledge in the treaty the pre-eminence of rank which might justly be claimed by the Emperor of the East. These terms were rejected with disdain. One of the Ambassadors was dismissed with a fitting answer from the Emperor, but his colleagues were placed in irons. Magnentius and Constantius were now eager for the fight, and, after several skirmishes, the tug of war was reserved for the field of Mursa. The engagement soon became general: it was maintained with various and singular turns of fortune, and scarcely ended with the darkness of the night. The number of the slain was computed at fifty-four thousand men, and the slaughter of the conquerors was more considerable than that of the vanquished. Notwithstanding the invectives of a servile orator, there is not the least reason to believe that the tyrant deserted his own standard in the beginning of the engagement. He displayed the virtues of a General and of a soldier till the day was irrecoverably lost, and his camp in the possession of the enemy. Magnentius then consulted his safety, and, throwing away the imperial ornaments, escaped with difficulty. In a short time the cavalry, legions, and auxiliaries of Italy renewed the oath of allegiance to Constantius. The pride of Magnentius was reduced to sue for peace, but in vain; for the Emperor, though he granted fair terms of pardon to all who abandoned the standard of rebellion, avowed his inflexible resolution to inflict a just punishment on the crimes of an assassin, whom he prepared to overwhelm on every side by the effort of his victorious arms, by sea as well as by land. He ultimately fell upon his sword.*

Constantius being now freed from the threats of his brother, who had again and again urged upon him a different line of conduct with regard to Athanasius, he flung away the mask behind which he had endeavoured to conceal his real purposes. He now reigned alone, none daring to arrest his sanguinary designs. The Bishop of Alexandria did not long enjoy his restored dignity; and, from the circumstances which had attended his restoration, he had become in the eyes of the Emperor a bitter personal enemy, against whom he resolved to avenge himself to the utmost of his power. Eager, however, as he was to inflict summary punishment on the obnoxious Prelate, he found it impossible to effect his purpose with safety till, after two years of incessant plotting, he had obtained the sentence of two Synods held at Arles and Milan in his favour. To show the condition to which the church had reduced itself by claiming the inter-

* Magnentius is said by Zonaras to have sacrificed a girl to propitiate the gods on this occasion, lib. xiii. Victor the younger describes his death with some horrid circumstances: "Transfosso latere, ut erat vasti corporis, vulnere naribusque et ore cruorem effundens, expiravit." If we can give credit to Zonaras, the tyrant, before he expired, had the pleasure of murdering with his own hand his mother and his brother Desiderius.

ference of the civil power, we need but mention, that those Prelates who would not subscribe to the decision of the Councils were informed, that unless they agreed to the condemnation of Athanasius, according to the decree of the Synods, they would themselves be deposed and banished by a similar ordinance. Still greater violence was exercised against some of the other Clergy: the prison and the scourge were become the common resource of the Emperor and his Arian subjects against those of the opposite creed. Men of the most irreproachable character were driven from their churches to make room for others, who had neither learning nor experience to qualify them for their office; and the evil spirits of schism and persecution shared the domain of the church between them.* In the mean time, on the return of Athanasius to Alexandria, religious joy and zeal appeared in the character of the age by a number devoting themselves to a monastic life. Acts of mercy and liberality were also abundantly performed. Every house seemed to be a church set apart for prayer. Such are the views which Athanasius himself gives of the effects of his restoration. A number of his enemies retracted, and justified him in the most honourable manner; and among these the recantation of Ursaces and Valens is remarkable.† Asclepas was also restored to Gaza, and Marcellus to Ancyra, though the latter was not unmolested. The suspicion of his unsoundness was perhaps justly increased by the less ambiguous sentiments of Photinus, Bishop of Sirmium, who was supposed to tread in his steps, and was, in a Council at that place, deposed as a Sabellian by universal consent.‡ Garminius, an Arian, was elected in his stead, and then, as well as at this day, the Sabellians and the Arians, in opposing each other, assaulted the truth, which lay between them: the former removing all distinction between the Father and the Son, the latter establishing a difference which took away the Trinity of the Godhead. Each desired to remove the mystery from the doctrine, and in the attempt corrupted it; while those who were taught of God, and were content with inadequate ideas, sincerely worshipped the Trinity in unity, and mourned over the abominations of the times.§

The orthodox were called to endure a great fight of afflictions. Athanasius and several other Bishops were banished, and their sees were filled with Arians, who caused numerous disturbances in the church. Many Bishops in Egypt and Libya were slain during the course of this persecution, and others were most cruelly scourged, because they would not communicate with the Arian Bishop George of Alexandria; so much so, that pieces of the rods were so deeply fixed in the flesh, that they could not easily be withdrawn, and many through this excessive ill-treatment expired. Similar cruelties were exercised upon others of the faithful in Constantinople, who were compelled to communicate with the Arians. George, the heterodox Bishop of Alexandria, entered that city in Lent, 356, and com-

* Stebbing, History of the Christian Church, vol. i., p. 165.
† Sozom., Hist. Eccles., lib. iii., cap. 23, 24.
‡ Socrat., Hist. Eccles., lib. ii., cap. 18, 19; Sozom., Hist. Eccles., lib. iv., cap. 12.
§ Milner, History of the Church, vol. i., p. 544, cent. iv., chap. 4.

menced the following Easter to exert his rage upon the orthodox: he was supported by the Emperor, and easily found an opportunity to assert his claims to that see by the force of arms. Heraclius, an officer, was sent from the court to assist the insurgents: Sebastian, General of the forces in that country; Catophonius, Governor of Egypt; and Faustinus, the Treasurer; were the ministers of his cruelty. The time between Easter and Whit-Sunday was too short for all the bloody designs which he had against the faithful. It was not sufficient for him to drive the orthodox Clergy out of the town, seize their churches, and oblige them, with their Clergymen, to assemble in the desert; for so long as they were permitted to meet and worship God in any manner, the Arian cause was not considered safe. The heretics far exceeded the Pagans in acts of cruelty and blood. They forced their way into the houses of the exiles, massacred the inmates, and wantonly tore them in pieces after death. Those who exercised toward them compassion, and received for refuge fugitives from these tortures, were treated with as little humanity. Scarcely a day passed over, which was not a witness to some act of violence committed by the Arian Bishop George and his assistants in the persecution, who appeared to fix on the great festivals of the church as preferable to all other seasons for their diabolical work, inasmuch as large companies were then assembled. One Trinity Sunday, the orthodox Christians went out of the town, to engage in their devotions, which they had performed in the open fields ever since Easter, their churches since that period having been in the possession of the heterodox. George, having been apprized of their assembling, commanded Sebastian, the General, to fall upon them with his soldiers while they were at prayer. The service, however, was concluded before they arrived at the place, and the greater part of the congregation had departed; but Sebastian, unwilling to lose his labour, encouraged the troops to exert their fury on the few they found on the ground, without any distinction of age or sex. He cruelly ordered a great fire to be made, and several young men and women brought to it, whom he endeavoured, through fear of the flames, to induce to make a profession of Arianism. But, finding that the dread of even a cruel death had no influence upon them, he commanded them to be stripped, and so unmercifully beaten, especially on the face, that it was impossible even for their relations to recognise them for some days following. His barbarity did not stop here. Under his direction, they were scourged with palm-branches recently cut, with such violence, that many languished but a few days, and then expired; while those who recovered were obliged to undergo a variety of sufferings, before the broken pieces of the rods could be extracted from the flesh: some died under the operation, who, instead of complaining of the treatment they underwent, or reproaching their adversaries with cruelty, invoked the assistance of Christ, for whose sake they suffered. The virtue of patience which they exercised, only exasperated the Arians the more against them. Those who survived throughout this sanguinary day were banished, while the remains of such as died under the hands of the persecutors were thrown into

the fields as food for the dogs; and the cemeteries contiguous to the city were guarded, in order to prevent their relatives and friends giving them interment.

The "noble army of martyrs" received constant accession in numbers at Alexandria, through the instrumentality of the Arians. Many suffered martyrdom because they would neither renounce the orthodox faith, nor communicate with the usurping Bishop, nor with his supporters. Some were stabbed, others had their throats cut upon the spot; some were strangled, were thrown headlong over some precipice, or starved in prison. Secundus, a certain Priest, differed in some points of doctrine from the Arian Bishop of that name, who had embraced those heretical opinions from their first appearance in the church: the Bishop, indignant that Secundus should reject the doctrines which he proposed with so much mistaken zeal, took with him an individual of the name of Stephen, who had embraced similar errors with himself; and when they found that they could not subdue the Priest in any other way, they murdered him: he expired praying for his assassins, that they might not suffer for this cruelty inflicted upon him. Alexandria was too small a theatre for the atrocious acts of these persecutors to be exhibited: they therefore applied to Constantius for an order commanding the banishment of all the orthodox Bishops of Egypt and Libya, and placing their churches in the hands of the Arians. This document was committed to Sebastian, the commander of the Roman forces in those districts. As soon as he received it, he made known the Emperor's commands to all his subordinate officers; and a considerable number of Bishops and other Ecclesiastics were seized, and laden with chains. The Emperor's direction was only that the Prelates of the communion of Athanasius should be exiled; but these persecutors of the truth, without any regard to the age or infirmities of those venerable persons, sent them into wild and uninhabited places, at a great distance from their churches. Those who came from Libya were ordered into the great desert of Oasis, in Thebais; and those of Thebais, into the worst and most inhospitable parts of Libya. Those who were not banished, were sentenced to work in the mines and quarries; while others fled, to avoid the death with which they were threatened. A few joined the Arians, not being able to endure the fierceness of the persecution. Among those whom the Most High supported by his grace on this trying occasion, were some who had been Bishops above fifty years; namely, Ammonius, Muis, Psenosiris, Nilamnon, Plenus, Mark, and Athenodorus, most of whom had been invested with the episcopal dignity anterior to the assembling of the Council of Nice. The difficulty and length of their journeys to the places of exile were designed to harass, and ultimately to destroy, these victims. No compassion was shown to the weak and the sickly: all were compelled to travel, and to keep what pace their merciless guards thought fit to dictate. One of them died on the road; but the conductors prosecuted their cruelties even after death, and refused the body to his relatives for interment. The other of the exiled Bishops had been ordained by Athanasius, or raised to that dignity since his promotion to the see

of Alexandria: their names were Caias, Philo, Hermes, Agathus, Anagamphus, Ammonius, Mark, Adelphus, and Dracontius; the last of whom was made Bishop of Hieropolis: he was banished to a castle in the desert of Clysma, in Arcadia, where he received consolation from a visit of Hilarion. Psinable, in Thebais, was the prison of Adelphus. Hierax and Dioscorus, both Priests of the church of Alexandria, were sent to the desert of Soina, which was probably the name of a division of that part of Oasis. Of the places to which others were banished, little is known.

A great change in civil affairs having taken place by the death of Constans, and the ruin of the usurper Magnentius, Constantius, now sole master of the empire, revived the persecution. About the year 351, Paul of Constantinople was sent into Mesopotamia, heavily ironed; and at length to Cucusis, on the confines of Cappadocia. There, after suffering cruel hardships, he was strangled.* Macedonius, by an armed force, attended with much effusion of blood, took possession of the see. Paul received the crown of martyrdom, and the Arians seemed ambitious to surpass the bloody fame of Galerius.† The imbecile mind of Constantius was again prejudiced by absurd calumnies against Athanasius; and a Council at Milan‡ was convened in the year 355, in the presence of the Emperor, who proposed to them an Arian creed, which he recommended by this argument,—that God had declared in his favour by his victories.§ Prosperity, it seems, had not strengthened his reasoning powers; but, unhappily, had increased the depravity of his heart. Here appeared the magnanimous constancy of Lucifer,‖ Bishop of Cagliari, in Sardinia; and

* "They pursued Paul, Bishop of Constantinople; and, having seized him at Cucusum, a city of Cappadocia, they had him strangled, by order of Philip, the Proconsul, who was the protector of their heresy, and the active agent of their most atrocious projects. Such were the murders to which the blasphemy of Arius gave rise. A virulent opposition was raised by this faction against the only-begotten Son of God, and his servants were not spared." (Theodoret., Hist. Eccles., lib. ii., cap. 5; see also Socrat., Hist. Eccles., lib. ii., cap. 26.)

† Milner, History of the Church, cent. iv., chap. 4, vol. i., p. 546.

‡ The Eusebians, as well as Liberius, the Bishop of Rome, having demanded of Constantius the convocation of a Council, it was assembled at Milan in 355. The object of the Eusebians was to effect the condemnation of Athanasius. All the influence of the Emperor was afforded them. The Eusebian Bishops acted throughout with extreme violence, and a total disregard of all ecclesiastical usage. They, in the first place, brought forward an imperial edict, containing all the venom of their heresy: upon this the delegates of Liberius demanded that the doctrine of Arius should be condemned; but Constantius declared this doctrine to be orthodox, and told them that he did not require their advice. The third session was held in the palace; the Arian party fearing the violence of the people, who had declared openly in favour of Athanasius. The Emperor then sent for the three Prelates who constantly refused to testify against the Bishop, Eusebius, Lucifer, and Dionysius, and commanded them either to sign or prepare for banishment. The Arian eunuchs were set against Hilary, the Deacon, whom they stopped and cruelly beat. (Landon's Councils.)

§ Luciferi Lib. de Regibus Apostaticis.

‖ Lucifer refused to allow the decree made in the Council of Alexandria, A.D. 352, for receiving the Arian Bishops who openly acknowledged their errors. This he opposed so resolutely, that, rather than yield, he chose to separate himself from the communion of the rest, and to form a new schism, which bore his name, and soon gained a considerable footing, especially in the West. He was also one of the deputies sent by Liberius to the Council of Milan in 355. As Lucifer is honoured by the Church of Rome as a Saint, Baronius pretends that he abandoned his schism, and returned to the communion of the church, before his death. But his contemporary, Ruffinus, who probably knew

the pious self-denial of Eusebius, Bishop of Vercellæ, in Italy. These Prelates were animated with a sincere spirit of piety on this occasion, and answered, that the Nicene faith had always been the faith of the church. "I ask not your advice," said the Emperor; "and you shall not hinder me from following Arius, if I think fit." The Emperor's Creed was read in the church; but the people, more sincere and more simple than the great, and more willingly attached to the doctrine of the Trinity, because they read it in their Bibles, rejected the faith of Constantius. The condemnation of Athanasius* was, however, insisted on; and Dionysius, Bishop of Milan, and the two others just mentioned, were most unreasonably required to subscribe to it. "Obey, or be banished," was the imperious mandate. The Bishops lifted up their hands to heaven, and told Constantius, that the empire was not his, but God's; and reminded him of the day of judgment. He drew his sword on them in a rage, but contented himself with ordering their banishment. Hilary, the Deacon, was stripped and scourged, and ridiculed by Ursaces and Valens, who had recanted some time ago. Hilary blessed God, and bore the indignity as a Christian. The greater part of the Prelates subscribed to the condemnation of Athanasius; a few only testified that the grace of God was still as powerful as ever in supporting his people, and in causing them to suffer gladly, rather than to sin. Others, besides the three mentioned above, joined in the same measure, particularly Maximus, Bishop of Naples, who was tortured in hopes of forcing his submission, because of the weakness of his body. In the end he was banished, and died in exile. Eusebius† of Vercellæ was sent into Palestine; Lucifer into Syria; and Dionysius into Cappadocia, where he died shortly after.‡

It is worthy of notice, that among those who suffered from persisting in their virtuous resolution not to sign the condemnation of Athanasius, while they were convinced of his innocence, was Liberius, the Bishop of Rome. This distinguished man, on being summoned to Milan, whither he was carried almost as a prisoner, was forthwith placed before the tribunal of the Emperor, who sternly ordered him to renounce further communion with the impious Athanasius. "All the other Bishops have condemned him," said he: "why do you resist? Will you, for any scruple of your own, trouble the peace of the universe, which it is my duty to preserve undisturbed?" Liberius replied, that the judgments of Ecclesiastics ought to be guided by the most rigorous attention to justice; that many of those who had signed the condemnation of Athanasius were not acquainted with the circumstances of the case; that they had been influenced, on the one hand, by the desire of possessing the bribes held out to

him, assures us that he died in the schism which he had formed, A.D. 370. His works were published at Paris by John Till, Bishop of Meaux, in 1568, and at Venice about 1780, in fol., with additions.

* Athanasii Opera, ad Solit., tom. i., p. 831.

† Ado, in his Chronicle, anno 361, says, that Lucifer was sent to Palestine, and Eusebius first to Scythopolis, and afterwards into Cappadocia; and so likewise does Jerome. (Hieron., De Vir. Illust., cap. 95, 96.)

‡ Theodoret., Hist. Eccles., lib. ii., cap. 16.

them,—and, on the other, by the fear of punishment, should they refuse to comply; and he added, with the firmness which became his character and office, that though he were alone in his resistance to the unjust procedure, the faith would still be preserved in safety; for it had already once happened, that only three persons could be found who resisted an unjust ordinance. Eusebius, one of the Bishops present, immediately said, "Do you liken the Emperor, then, to Nebuchadnezzar?" evidently understanding his allusion to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. "No," replied Liberius; "but to condemn a man unheard, is to be guilty of an injustice similar to his." Constantius, enraged at the freedom and resolution which Liberius displayed, sentenced him to be banished into Thrace,* where he continued two years; at the end of which time, so little remained of the spirit which formerly distinguished the professors of Christianity, he purchased a reversal of his sentence, by agreeing to all the Emperor and his Ministers required. The character of Liberius was that which appears to have been common to the greater number of Ecclesiastics at this period. During his examination before the Emperor, while insisting on the acquittal of Athanasius, he exhorted the Monarch to employ the authority which he had received from God, to enforce the universal reception of the Nicene Creed. The dogmatic, persecuting spirit which had already produced such deplorable circumstances, was thus manifested by one of the very men who were now suffering the effects of its introduction. But, instead of this haughty and intolerant principle tending to establish those who encouraged it in an unchanging profession of the truth, it generally left them, like an exhausted stimulant, weak and wavering, when they were most in need of firmness and energy. This first era of persecution, therefore, is found to have been fruitful to excess in apostates and renegades from the faith. Hundreds of Ecclesiastics signed and rejected the Nicene Creed, at the instigation of the reigning Monarch: pride, rather than faith, prompted them to clamorous professions of zeal; and pride being formed of materials far less durable than faith, these loud and haughty preachers of conformity, these supplicants at the thrones of their Monarchs for edicts against heresy, sunk into the earth at the prospect of one tithe of the evils which the humblest and weakest of the meek, faithful Christians of a former age had borne, and smiled under with contented resignation. Liberius was far from being the only one, even of the most virtuous, of the followers of Athanasius, who recanted the principles for the establishment of which they would have had the Emperor publish an ordinance. The venerable Bishop of Cordova, even, who had suffered greatly in

* Liberius being thus driven from his see, another was placed on it in his room; and the person whom the Emperor and the Arian faction fixed upon was Felix, then only Deacon of the church in Rome. But the Clergy could not proceed to a new election, without an open violation of the oath they had taken. The people began to mutiny; and, assembling in crowds, would suffer none of the Arian faction to enter their churches. The imperial palace, therefore, served instead of a church: three of the Emperor's eunuchs represented the people; and three Bishops, slaves of the court, —Epictetus of Circumcellæ, Acacius of Cæsarea, and Basilius of Ancyra,—ordained the new-elected Bishop. Thus was Felix chosen and ordained. (Bower, History of the Popes.)

testimony of the truth during the reign of Diocletian, and had reached the hundredth year of his life; who had been the chief actor in the Council of Nice, and was generally regarded as the firmest supporter Athanasius possessed; consented, after suffering a short imprisonment, to put his name to an Arian Confession of Faith; and thus gave another proof, though he afterwards expressed his repentance for what he had done, how rare is the connexion between a dogmatical and a firm and intrepid spirit.* Flattery and menaces were both employed to induce Hosius to condemn Athanasius. A few lines of his answer to an imperious letter of the Emperor may give us some idea of his temper:†—"I confessed the first time in the persecution under Herculeus, your grandfather. If you likewise desire to persecute me, I am ready still to suffer anything, rather than betray the truth. It is not so much a personal malice against Athanasius, as the love of heresy, which influences these men. I myself invited them to come to me, and declare, at the Council of Sardica, what they knew against him. They durst not; they all refused. Athanasius came afterwards to your court at Antioch: he desired his enemies might be sent for, that they might make good their accusations. Why do you still hearken to them who refused such fair proposals? How can you endure Ursaces and Valens, after they have recanted and acknowledged their calumny in writing? Remember, you are a mortal man: be afraid of the day of judgment. God hath given you the empire, and hath committed the church to our care. I write thus through my concern for your eternal welfare; but, with respect to your requisition, I cannot agree with Arians, nor write against Athanasius. You act for his enemies; but in the day of judgment you must defend yourself alone." Constantius kept him a year at Sirmium, without respect to his age or infirmities. His orders, addressed to the Bishops, were to condemn Athanasius, and to communicate with the Arians, under pain of banishment. The Judges were directed to see to the execution of these things. Ursaces and Valens, whose instability should have destroyed their credit, assisted the persecution by informations; zealous heretics, by force of arms, were intruded into the place of the exiled; and Arianism seemed well-nigh to have avenged the cause of fallen idolatry.‡

The adventures of the persecuted Prelate in his sufferings were extraordinary. He was for some time preserved in the house of a pious woman with great care and fidelity.§ But we need not enlarge

* Stebbing, History of the Christian Church, vol. i., p. 173.

† Athanasii Opera, ad Solit., tom. i., p. 838.

‡ Milner, History of the Church, cent. iv., chap. 4, vol. i., p. 548.

§ When the storm descended, to which we shall presently refer, he had escaped falling into the hands of the Governor of Egypt, who, at the command of the Emperor, and at the request of the friends of George, had formed plans to arrest him: he concealed himself in the house of a holy woman at Alexandria. It is said that she was endowed with such extraordinary beauty, that those who beheld her regarded her as a phenomenon of nature; and that men of gravity and reflection kept aloof from her, for fear of giving rise to slander, or of exciting disadvantageous reports. She possessed, in the flower of youth, such modesty and such wisdom as would have conferred beauty on an individual who had not received that gift from nature. It is related, that Athanasius sought refuge in the house of that holy person by the revelation of God, who designed to save him in this manner. She had sufficient courage to receive him, and sufficient prudence

on the various hardships to which he was exposed;* suffice it to mention only a few circumstances which occurred. He would doubtless be informed of the measures taken against him at Arles and Milan, and of the distressed condition of his followers and fellow-labourers. But his courage was equal to his piety; and he continued with unabated energy to instruct his people, and to urge them to await with fortitude the storm which he foresaw was ready to break upon their heads. In a letter which he wrote to a Bishop who had lately retired into the deserts, he expresses all those sentiments of high and resolute devotion which so remarkably distinguished him in every period of his career. "O my dear Dracontius,"† says he, "your retreat has deeply afflicted us. Before your ordination you lived for yourself, but now you belong to your flock and to the church. If you tremble at the fearful aspect of the times in which we live, where is your courage? It is in such circumstances as these that it especially behoves us to show our zeal and boldness for the cause of Jesus Christ. Truth must be victorious in the end: error can only triumph for a time. If those who went before us had been timid and wavering, would you now have been a Christian? Feeble as you say you are, you yet should be the guardian of your flock; lest the enemies of the truth, finding them abandoned, should take occasion to spoil and devour them. Leave us not alone in the combat!"

The anticipated tempest descended at length in all its fury. Athanasius had repelled more than one imperial order to retire from his see, and the people of Alexandria expressed their determination to defend him against whatever attempts might be made to expel him. Threats having thus proved abortive, the Ministers of the Emperor had recourse to violence; and one night, when the Bishop and a numerous congregation were assembled at their devotions in the cathedral, a body of five thousand soldiers, under the command of Syrianus, Duke of Egypt, were landed in the city, and immediately led to invest the church. The tumult occasioned by this proceeding spread instant alarm through the startled congregation, and all rose to prepare for a precipitate flight. But Athanasius, by his calm and resigned bearing, repressed the panic which had seized the assembly; and, in obedience to his exhortations, it immediately commenced and chanted the 135th Psalm. While the congregation was performing this act of devotion, the soldiers were assailing the doors of the church with incessant blows; and, in a few minutes, the whole armed multitude burst furiously into the aisles of the sacred edifice. A hundred voices were raised to implore Athanasius to fly; but he remained immovable in his episcopal chair, watching the escape of his flock;

to preserve his life. She alone ministered to him, and supplied him with what nature required. She washed his feet, brought him food, provided him with the books he wanted, and acted so prudently, that, during the whole time of his residence with her, none of the inhabitants of Alexandria suspected the place of his retreat. (Sozom., Hist. Eccles., lib. v., cap. 6.)

* Athanasii Opera, De Fuga, tom. i., p. 717.

† Such was the respect entertained for this Dracontius, that many Gentiles promised to embrace Christianity from the admiration of his character. (Vita Sanct. Athanasii Opera, p. 58.)

nor did he leave his station till the last were about to depart, when he was dragged away by some of the most courageous and devoted of his Clergy. The confusion which prevailed prevented his being discovered, and he was speedily lost in the dense crowd which surrounded the church. But, as he was driven to and fro by the terrified multitude, against whom the soldiers were exercising the most brutal violence, he lost his footing, and lay for some moments in imminent peril of being trampled to death. Having, however, with great difficulty raised himself from the ground, he contrived to make his way to a place of concealment, and thence to the deserts of Thebais; where he was sure of finding a safe asylum and numerous friends among the devout hermits who inhabited that solitary region. But his steps were traced by the indefatigable ministers of Arian rage; bands of soldiers were despatched to seize him in his retreat, and offers of the richest kind held out to those who should have the good fortune to bring him to the Emperor, either alive or dead. His safety now wholly depended, humanly speaking, on the courage and fidelity of the Monks and hermits, in whose cells he had found a shelter. Nor was his confidence in their assistance abused. Protecting him, sometimes by force, at others by cautious contrivances, and not unfrequently by even sacrificing their lives in resisting his pursuers, they enabled him to defy all the arts which were employed to effect his ruin. But the peril to which his protectors were thus exposed, determined Athanasius to go farther into the deserts; and it was not till he had reached the wildest and most remote district of those inhospitable plains that he paused in his wanderings.* While in the desert he composed some of his most important treatises; and conforming himself in the strictest manner to the mode of life followed by the Monks, he never forgot the labours or duties of a Bishop. He thus became an object of the highest veneration to the ascetics. Anthony had bequeathed to him his garment; and, it being now presented to him, he clothed himself in it, and continued to wear it to the end of his life. This conduct, in a man whose station had placed him in the midst of a proud and busy world, could not fail to be regarded as worthy of profound admiration; and Athanasius, by the persecutions which he suffered, saw his reputation extended over a region from which fame might have retreated in despair. There is, however, reason to believe that Athanasius had sometimes the courage to leave his solitude; and that he ventured to present himself more than once to his faithful disciples in Alexandria.† His retreat, however, continued unbroken.

At these untoward events in the Christian church, the Pagans were encouraged to assist the heretics in the persecution; asserting, that "the Arians have embraced our religion." A Prelate was not wanting to support these proceedings,—George, of Cappadocia, who began his

* Athanasius has left, in one of his Epistles, a strong and melancholy description of the miseries endured by his flock during his absence. Their houses were broken open in the dead of night, they were scourged without mercy, and the tenderest females were often so beaten in the face as to become undistinguishable by their friends.

† Stebbing, History of the Christian Church, vol. i., p. 168.

usurpation in the year 356. Through his influence, supported by the secular arm, the friends of the Nicene faith were cruelly beaten, and some expired beneath the infliction. A sub-Deacon, having been severely scourged, was sent to the mines, without being allowed time to dress his wounds, and he died on the road. Venerable Bishops were sent into the deserts throughout Egypt, and Arianism reigned and revelled in blood. The episcopal station was sold to unworthy men, the profession of Arianism being the only condition of office. The cruelties of George provoked the Alexandrians to retaliation, but military force prevailed; and after this Bishop had been once expelled, he returned still more terrible and detested; nay, so deplorably misinformed was Constantius, that, in a letter to the people of Alexandria, he represents this veritable George as one who was in every way capable of instructing others in heavenly things. It was a sight of this letter that deterred the persecuted Prelate from his projected visit to the Emperor, and led him to flee yet further into the deserts. It was during his solitary abode in that region, that he wrote his Apology to Constantius, in which are to be found strong traces of that rapid eloquence and clear reasoning for which Athanasius is celebrated: to adopt the sentiment of Milner, "integrity and fervour appear throughout; but it were to be wished that less zeal on his own account, and more on account of his divine Master, were visible in this, as well as in his other writings." In truth, the connexion of the doctrine of the Trinity with the honour of Christ, and with lively faith in his mediation, is so plain, that practical, serious, humble religion, if it exist at all in any scene of controversy, must be found on that side. Men who degrade the divine Saviour into a creature, will, of course, exalt themselves, and cannot have that humility and faith which are the essential ingredients of a holy life. The value of the apostolical doctrines, so fiercely persecuted in the fourth century, rests not on speculation, but on the holy tendency of their nature. There is sufficient proof of the existence of this holy tendency and influence both in respect of Athanasius and other Trinitarians of that time; and there is also more than sufficient proof of the contrary tendency of the doctrines supported by the Arians. But it must be allowed that the evidence of the former sort is scanty: Christian godliness continued very low in all this period; and good men, in their writings and reflections, attended too little to the connexion which subsists between doctrine and practice.*

Eusebius of Vercellæ, one of the most honest and pious of the Prelates of this mournful period of the church's history, yet suffered very severely in Palestine during his exile. The persecution extended even to Gaul, which had hitherto preserved the simplicity of apostolical confession unmolested. In Constantinople Macedonius, by the terror of his persecutions, drove those of the general church and the Novatian dissenters into a sympathy for each other, which their mutual prejudices had for some time prevented. Both endured bitter persecution, being obliged to communicate with the Arians, or to undergo

* Milner, History of the Church, cent. iv., chap. 4, vol. i., p. 550.

a variety of hardships.* Agelius, the Novatian Bishop, fled. A Priest and a Monk of theirs were tortured, and the latter died under this usage. Novatianism retained much of the influence of the Holy Spirit, and was honoured with contributing a quota of that cloud of witnesses who suffered for the name of Christ. The Novatians had three churches in Constantinople, one of which was thrown down by the Emperor's orders. The Novatians carried away the materials to the other side of the sea; the women and children wrought diligently, and thus it was rebuilt. In the next reign, by the Emperor's permission, they carried back the materials, and rebuilt their church in Constantinople, and called it "Anastasia," which signifies, "risen again." An attempt was again made to re-unite those of the general church with the Novatians: the former were the more ready, because they had no place of worship at all; but that selfishness and bigotry which had ever been the bane and mischief of that people, prevented the union.† A remarkable instance of human infirmity it is now our duty to record, and which should teach us a lesson of pity and admonition. Hosius, the Bishop of Cordova, had been confined a year at Sirmium, his relations had been also persecuted, and he himself had suffered in his own person by a variety of tortures. By thus afflicting him, the Arian tyrant thought he served the cause; and by such inhuman measures were the patrons of the heresy stimulated to seek the destruction of godliness. Yet so infatuated was the spirit of Constantius, that he all along was liberally supporting the most expensive forms and ornaments of Christian worship, while he was labouring, with all his might, to eradicate Christian doctrine.‡ We have alluded already to the defection of Hosius: we shall now refer to the treatment which he received at the hands of the persecuting Arians. Constantius, without hearkening to the reason he urged in justification of the conduct of Athanasius, and also of his own, and without paying the least

* At this period a union was nearly effected between the Novatian and the Catholic (orthodox) churches; for, as they held the same opinions concerning the Godhead, and were subjected to a common persecution, the members of both churches assembled and prayed together. The Catholics then possessed no houses of prayer; for the Arians had wrested them from them. It appears, too, that from the frequent intercourse between the members of each church, they began to reflect that no solid reason could be adduced for their separation. A reconciliation would certainly have been effected, had not the desire of the multitude been frustrated by the envy of a few individuals, who asserted that there was an ancient law prohibiting the union of the churches. (Sozom., Hist. Eccles., lib. iv., cap. 20.)

† Novatian first separated from the communion of Cornelius, Bishop of Rome, on pretence of his being too easy in admitting to repentance those who had fallen off in times of persecution. He indulged his inclination to severity so far, as to deny that such as had fallen into gross sins, especially those who had apostatized from the faith under the persecution set on foot by Decius, were to be again received into the bosom of the church; grounding his opinion on that of St. Paul, "It is impossible," &c. (Heb. vi. 4—6.) The Novatians did not deny but a person falling into sin, how grievous soever, might obtain pardon by repentance; for they themselves recommended repentance in the strongest terms; but their doctrine was, that the church had it not in its power to receive sinners into its communion, as having no way of remitting sins but by baptism; which once received could not be repeated. In process of time, the Novatians softened and moderated the rigour of their master's doctrine, and only refused absolution to very great sinners. The two leaders, Novatian and Novatus, were proscribed, and declared heretics; not for excluding penitents from communion, but for denying that the church had the power of remitting sins. (Henderson.)

‡ Milner, History of the Church, cent. iv., chap. 4, vol. i., p. 551.

regard to the earnest prayers and entreaties, to the paternal exhortations and admonitions, of so venerable a Bishop, ordered him to quit his diocess forthwith, and retire to Sirmium, where he was detained in durance, for the period of a whole year, in a kind of exile. But, unaffected with the hardships he underwent, with the loss of dignity, and with the inhuman treatment of his relations, who were all persecuted, deprived of their estates, and reduced, on his account, to beggary, Hosius still stood up in defence of Athanasius, and rejected with indignation the proposals of his enemies, who were striving to induce him, at least, to communicate with them. They therefore resolved to proceed to extremity, and either gain over to their party a man of his station and rank, or, by removing him out of the way, deprive the orthodox of their chief support. Accordingly, with the approbation and consent of Constantius, they caused him, first, to be closely confined, and, afterwards, cruelly beaten; then to be put on the rack, and inhumanly tortured, as if he had been the worst of criminals.* Even against these exquisite sufferings, the firmness of his mind was proof for some time; but the weakness of his body compelled him to yield at last, and communicate with Ursaces and Valens. Athanasius asserts, in one place, that Hosius signed his condemnation; but in another he seems to contradict this. Sulpitius Severus thinks he was guilty of no other crime, but that of communicating with the Arians. However, that he did not stop here, but signed the Arian confession of Sirmium, is but too manifest from several unexceptionable and contemporary writers. Phœbadius, Bishop of Agen, in France, in his answer, written about this period, to the Arians, boasting that their doctrines had been approved and embraced by the celebrated Hosius, allows the fact; but he adds, that he was induced so to do by compulsion, not conviction. Be that as it may, the fall of Hosius, whom the orthodox regarded as their invincible champion, surprised the Christian church. Some could not credit the story: others ascribed the defection to his great age, which was supposed to have enfeebled his judgment. The account was immediately published throughout the Eastern world, and great rejoicing was made on the occasion by the Arian Bishops, who viewed such an accession to their party as an important victory gained over the orthodox. Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers, who was at this time in exile, appears to have been misinformed respecting the circumstances attendant upon the painful fall of Hosius, otherwise he would certainly have made some allowance for the barbarous and inhuman treatment the unhappy Prelate experienced, and not have indulged in such severe and caustic reflections, as, that it had pleased

* "This Prelate had but a short time before been sent into exile by the intrigues of the Arians; but, at the earnest solicitation of those convened at Sirmium, the Emperor summoned him thither, with the design either of influencing him by persuasion, or of compelling him by force to give his sanction to their proceedings; for, if this could be effected, they considered it would give great authority to their sentiments. On this occasion, therefore, he was most unwillingly obliged to be present; and when he refused to concur with them, stripes and tortures were inflicted on the old man, until they had constrained him to acquiesce in, and subscribe, their exposition of the faith." (Socratis Hist. Eccles., lib. ii., cap. 32.)

the Most High to prolong his life to this period, that the world might know from what state he had fallen. That a man in the one hundredth year of his age should yield to most exquisite and repeated torments, cannot be a subject of surprise. But the Arians, among whom Hilary lived, took special care to conceal whatever might have a tendency to depreciate their vaunted victory. The unfortunate Prelate did not live long after his fall. He died in the concluding part of the year 357. He grievously complained, even at the point of death, of the violence that had been offered to him: he cordially anathematized the heresy of Arius, and strongly exhorted, by his last will, all men to reject it.* Thus we have seen, to his end, the most venerable character of that age, still, in his heart, true to his God. The length of his days only exposed him to a greater variety of suffering; and though Satan's malice was permitted to do him much mischief, nevertheless, he was mercifully enabled to die in peace, and to prove that the Lord faileth not them that are his.

In the year 359 two Councils were held, the one at Rimini, the other at Seleucia, with a view to support Arianism. In the former, a number of good men were artfully seduced, by the snares of the Arians, to agree to what they did not understand. This sect, now victorious everywhere, began to show itself disunited, and to separate into two parties. In these confusions, Macedonius lost the see of Constantinople, which was given to Eudoxius, translated from Antioch, in the year 360. Constantius poorly endeavoured to atone for the corruptions, both of principles and practice, with which he filled the church, by offering large vessels of gold and silver; carpets, for the altar, of gold tissue, adorned with precious stones; curtains of gold and divers colours for the doors of the church; and also liberal donatives to the Clergy, the widows, and the virgins. In the mean while Christendom groaned under the weight of extorted Arian subscriptions; and Macedonius, the deposed Bishop of Constantinople, formed another sect of those who were enemies to the divinity of the Holy Ghost. These, by the advantage of sober manners, spread themselves among the monasteries, and increased the corruption which then pervaded the Christian world. The see of Antioch being vacant,† Meletius, Bishop of Sebaste, a man of exemplary meekness

* Bower, History of the Popes, 4to., vol. i., p. 154, London, 1750.

† The members of the Arian faction, believing that Meletius was of one mind with themselves, and that he upheld the same doctrines, petitioned Constantius to commit the reins of the church of Antioch into his hands; for they fearlessly violated every enactment in their attempts to strengthen their own impious cause. The very foundation of their blasphemy was laid upon the transgression of the laws, and they everywhere introduced numerous innovations. Those who supported the apostolical doctrines, being aware of the sound principles of Meletius, as well as of his exemplary course of life and of his great virtues, warmly seconded the petition, and zealously took measures to insure the decree of his election being written and signed. When the decree had been duly completed, it was intrusted to the care of Eusebius, Bishop of Samosata, who was a noble defender and champion of the truth. Upon receiving the imperial command, Meletius returned, and was met by all the Bishops, by the Clergy, by the citizens, and even by the Jews and the Greeks, who were desirous of seeing so celebrated a man. The Emperor commanded him, and those other Bishops who possessed rhetorical abilities, to explain to the multitude the following words: "The Lord made me in the beginning of his ways, for his work;" and he commanded that each exposition should be

and piety, was chosen. The Arians supposed him to be of their party. Constantius ordered the new Bishop to preach before him on the controversial subject of the Trinity: Meletius delivered himself with Christian sincerity, rebuked the rashness of men who strove to fathom the divine nature, and exhorted his audience to adhere to the simplicity of the faith. He remained only a month in Antioch, and had the honour to be banished by the Emperor, who filled up the vacancy with Euzoius, the old friend of Arius. In consequence of this, the friends of Meletius separated from the Arians, and held their assemblies in the ancient church, which had been the first in Antioch. Besides the Arians, who were in possession of the Emperor's favour, there were two parties both sound in the Nicene faith, the Eustathians* before referred to, and the Meletians, who testified, in the strongest manner, their regard for their exiled Pastor.†

Nothing can contrast more strongly with the expansive and liberal spirit of primitive Christianity, than the repulsive conduct of its professors, and the tyrannical tone adopted by those who presumed to be its teachers; yet even this appears to have been necessary, and even advantageous to the permanence and extension of the faith. The religion of Christ shortly had to pass through the ordeal of those dark ages which followed the irruption of the barbarians. During this period, Christianity was to subsist as the conservative principle of social order and the sacred charities of life, the sole, if not always faithful, guardian of ancient knowledge, of letters, and of arts. But, in order to preserve its own existence, it assumed, of necessity, another form. It had a splendid and imposing ritual, to command the barbarous minds of its new proselytes, and one which might be performed by an illiterate priesthood; for the mass of the sacerdotal order could not but be involved in the general darkness of the times. A fearful Ichabod was inscribed upon the pulpit and the pew. Brief and definite formularies of doctrine were in requisition. As the ori-

committed to writing, in order to secure accuracy. George, Bishop of Laodicea, was the first who drew up an exposition, and in it he displayed the baneful nature of his heresy. Acacius, Bishop of Cæsarea, in his explanation, which was next completed, steered a middle course between the impiety of the Arians, and the purity of the apostolical doctrines, differing greatly from the one, and yet not preserving the characteristic features of the other. Thirdly, Meletius stood up, and explained the principles enforced by the ecclesiastical canons. He weighed all his words in the balance of truth, and carefully avoided saying either too much or too little. His discourse was heard with general approbation, and, being entreated to give a brief synopsis of his doctrines, he extended three of his fingers, and then closed two, leaving one only extended, and uttered the following remarkable words, "Three persons are conceived in the mind; but we speak as if addressing one." (Theodoret., Hist. Eccles., lib. ii., cap. 31.)

* So called from their founder, Eustathius, a Monk so foolishly fond of his own profession, that he condemned all other conditions of life. Whether this Eustathius were the same with the Bishop of Sebaste, and chief of the semi-Arians, is not easy to determine. He excluded married people from salvation, prohibited his followers from praying in their houses, and obliged them to quit all they had, as incompatible with the hopes of heaven. He drew them out of the other assemblies of Christians, to hold secret ones with him, and made them wear a particular habit; he appointed them to fast on Sundays, and taught them that the ordinary fasts of the church were needless after they had attained to a certain degree of purity, which he pretended to. He showed great horror for chapels built in honour of martyrs, and the assemblies held therein. He was condemned at the Council of Gangra, in Paphlagonia, held between the years 325 and 340.

† Milner, Hist. of the Church, cent. iv., chap. 4, vol. i., p. 554.

ginal languages, and even the Latin, fell into disuse, and before the modern languages of Europe were sufficiently formed to admit of translations, the sacred writings receded from general use: they became the depositaries of Christian doctrine, totally inaccessible to the laity, and almost as much so to the inferior Clergy. Creeds, therefore, became of essential importance, to compress the leading points of Christian truth into a small compass. And as the barbarous and ignorant mind cannot endure the vague and the indefinite, so it was essential that the main points of doctrine should be fixed, and cast into plain and emphatic propositions. Theological language was firmly established before the violent breaking up of society; and no more was evidently required of the barbarian convert, than to accept, with uninquiring submission, the established formulary of the faith, and gaze, in awe-struck veneration, at the solemn ceremonial.* The Athanasian controversy powerfully contributed to establish the supremacy of the Roman Pontiff. It became almost a contest between Eastern and Western Christendom; at least the West was neither divided like the East, nor submitted with the same, comparatively, willing obedience to the domination of Arianism under the imperial authority. It was necessary that some one influential Prelate should take the lead in this internecine strife. But, even were this acknowledged superiority of character and talent wanting, the dignity of the see would command the general respect; and what see could compete, at least in the West, with Rome? Antioch, Alexandria, or Constantinople, could alone rival, in pretensions to Christian supremacy, the old metropolis of the empire; and those sees were either fiercely contested, or occupied by Arian Prelates. Athanasius himself, by his residence, at two separate periods, at Rome, submitted, as it were, his cause to the Bishop of Rome. The imperial city became the centre of the ecclesiastical affairs of the West; and since the Trinitarian opinions eventually triumphed through the whole of the Christian world, the firmness and resolution with which the Roman Pontiffs, notwithstanding the defection of Liberius, adhered to the orthodox faith,—their uncompromising attachment to Athanasius, who, by degrees, was sanctified and canonized in the memory of Christendom,—might be one ground-work for that belief in their infallibility, which, however it would have been repudiated by Cyprian, and never completely prevailed in the East, became throughout the West the inalienable

* A creed is a form of words in which the articles of faith are comprehended. It is derived from the Latin *credo*, "I believe," with which the Apostles' Creed begins. In the Eastern church a summary of this sort was called μαθημα, "the lesson," because it was learned by the catechumens; γραφη, "the writing," or κανων, "the rule." But the most common name in the Greek church was συμβολον, or, "symbol," which term has also passed into the West. Hence creeds and confessions are commonly called *symbolical books*. The most ancient form of creeds is that which goes under the name of the Apostles' Creed: besides this there are several other ancient forms and scattered remains of creeds to be met with in the primitive records of the church; as, 1. The form of apostolical doctrine collected by Origen. 2. A fragment of a creed collected by Tertullian. 3. A remnant of a creed in the works of Cyprian. 4. A creed composed by Gregory Thaumaturgus for the use of his own church. 5. The creed of Lucien the martyr. 6. The creed of the Apostolical Constitutions. Besides these scattered remains of the ancient creeds, there are extant some perfect forms, as those of Jerusalem, Cæsarea, Antioch, &c.

spiritual heir-loom of the Roman Pontiffs. Christian history will doubtless show how powerfully this monarchical principle, if not established, yet greatly strengthened, by these consequences of the Athanasian controversy, tended to consolidate, and so to maintain, in still expanding influence, the Christianity of Europe.*

This conflict continued with unabated vigour till the close of the reign of Constantius. Arianism gradually assumed the ascendant, through the violence and the arts of the Emperor: all the more distinguished of the orthodox Bishops were in exile, or at least in disgrace. Though the personal influence of Athanasius was still felt throughout Christendom, his obscure place of concealment was probably unknown to the greater part of his own adherents. The Bishops of Poitiers, of Milan, and the violent Lucifer of Cagliari, were in exile; and though Constantius had consented to the return of Liberius to his see, he had returned with the disgrace of having consented to sign the new formulary framed at Sirmium, where the term "consubstantial," if not rejected, was at least suppressed. Yet the popularity of Liberius was undiminished, and the whole city indignantly rejected the insidious proposition of Constantius, that Liberius and his rival Felix should rule the see with conjoint authority. The parties had already come to blows, and even to bloodshed, when Felix, who, it was admitted, had never swerved from the Creed of Nice, and whose sole offence was entering into communion with the Arians, either from moderation, or conscious of the inferiority of his party, withdrew to a neighbouring city, where he soon closed his days, and relieved the Christians of Rome from the apprehension of a rival Pontiff. The unbending resistance of the Athanasians was no doubt confirmed, not merely by the variations in the Arian Creed, but by the new opinions † which they considered its legitimate offspring, and

* The orthodox Synod of Sardica admits the superior dignity of the successors of Peter. "Hoc enim optimum et valde congruentissimum esse videbitur, si ad caput, id est, ad Petri Apostoli sedem, de singulis quibusque provinciis Domini referant Sacerdotes." (Epist. Syn. Sard. apud Hilarium, Fragm. Oper. Hist., lib. ii., cap. 9.) It was disclaimed with equal distinctness by the seceding Arians. "Novam legem introducere putaverunt, ut Orientales Episcopi ab Occidentalibus judicarentur." (Fragm., lib. iii., cap. 12.) In a subsequent clause they condemn Julius, Bishop of Rome, by name. It is difficult to calculate the effect which would commonly be produced on men's minds by their involving in one common cause the two tenets, which, in fact, bore no relation to each other,—the orthodox belief in the Trinity, and the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome. (Sozomen, Hist. Eccles., lib. iv., cap. 11, 13; Theodoret., Hist. Eccles., lib. ii., cap. 17; Philostorg., Hist. Eccles., lib. iv., cap. 3.)

† Aetius was the originator of one set of opinions, which not merely denied the consubstantiality, but the similitude, of the Son to the Father. He was not only not of the same, but of a totally different, nature. Aetius, according to the account of his adversaries, was a bold and unprincipled adventurer; (Socrat., Hist. Eccles., lib. ii., cap. 35; Sozom., Hist. Eccles., lib. iii., cap. 15; lib. iv., cap. 12; Philostorg., Hist. Eccles., lib. iii., cap. 15, 17; Suidas, Voc. Αετιος· Epiphan. Hæres., § 76; Gregor. Nyssen, contra Eunom.;) and the career of a person of this class is exemplified in his life. The son of a soldier, at one time condemned to death and to the confiscation of his property, Aetius became a humble artisan, first as a worker in copper, afterwards in gold. His dishonest practices obliged him to give up the trade, but not before he had acquired some property. He attached himself to Paulinus, Bishop of Antioch; was expelled from the city by his successor; studied grammar at Anazarba; was encouraged by the Arian Bishop of that see, named Athanasius; returned to Antioch; was ordained Deacon, and again expelled the city. Discomfited in a public disputation with a Gnostic, he retired to Alexandria; where, being exercised in the art of rhetoric,

which appeared to justify their worst apprehensions of its inevitable consequences.* Council continued to follow Council, and the tumult and confusion of Christendom were perpetuated. Hence Hilary declares, that the "East and West are in a state of restlessness and disturbance. Deserting our spiritual charges; abandoning the people of God; neglecting the preaching of the Gospel: we are hurried about from place to place, sometimes to great distances, some of us infirm with age, with feeble constitutions or ill health, and are sometimes obliged to leave our sick brethren on the road. The whole administration of the empire, of the Emperor himself, the Tribunes and the Commanders, at this fearful crisis of the state, are solely occupied with the lives and the condition of the Bishops. The people are by no means unconcerned. The whole brotherhood watches in anxious suspense the event of these troubles; the establishment of post-horses is worn out by our journeyings; and all on account of a few wretches who, if they had the least remaining sense of religion, would say with the Prophet Jonah, 'Take us up, and cast us into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you; for we know that it is on our account that this great tempest is upon you.'" †

For the purpose, if possible, of throwing oil upon the waters of strife, a double Council was called, of the Eastern Prelates at Seleucia, and of the Western at Ariminum. At the latter Council all the Bishops of the West were summoned, the Emperor promising to supply them with the means of travelling and subsistence.‡ The whole number present was about four hundred: of this number eighty were Arians, headed by Ursaces and Valens. Their resolutions were firm and peremptory. The Arian doctrines were repudiated, and the assembly expressed their rigid adherence to the formulary of Nice. This was opposed by Ursaces and Valens, who objected to the use of the word "consubstantial," maintaining that it was far better to use the expression, "like to the Father in all things," than to employ new words, which only served to create divisions, and which, moreover, were not to be found in Scripture; and they then presented to the assembly a new formulary of faith, which they had privately drawn up. The orthodox Bishops answered, that they had no need of any new formulary; that they had met together not to learn what they ought to believe, but to oppose those who set themselves against the truth, and who introduced novelties; that it was necessary to condemn the doctrine of Arius, and without disguise to

he revenged himself on a Manichæan, who died of shame. He then became a public itinerant teacher, practising at the same time his lucrative art of a goldsmith. The Arians rejected Aetius with no less earnest indignation than the orthodox; but they could not escape being implicated, as it were, in his popularity; and the odious Anomeans, those who denied the similitude of the Son to the Father, brought new discredit even on the more temperate partisans of the Arian Creed. Another heresiarch, of a higher rank, still further brought disrepute on the Arian party. Macedonius, the Bishop of Constantinople, to the Arian tenet of the inequality of the Son to the Father, added the total denial of the divinity of the Holy Ghost. (Milman.)

* Milman, History of Christianity, vol. iii., p. 43.

† Hilarii Opera, Hist. Frag., lib. xi., cap. 25.

‡ This offer was refused, amongst others, by the British Bishops who were present, except three, who were too poor to maintain themselves. (Cave.)

receive that of Nicea. Then they declared the formulary of Valens and Ursaces to be utterly at variance with the true faith, and confirmed the Acts of Nicea, asserting that nothing whatever should be added to them. As Valens and his party refused to acquiesce in this decision, the Council proceeded to declare them heretics, and excommunicated and deposed them. This decree was signed by three hundred and twenty Bishops; and the doctrine of Arius, as well as that of Photinus and Sabellius, was anathematized. Up to this point, therefore, that is, while the Fathers of the Council had liberty of action granted to them, the orthodox faith was triumphant in the Council of Ariminum.

But after this decision both parties made their representation of the affair to the Emperor. The faithful, by the ten deputies whom they sent, declared that they could decide upon no step better calculated to confirm the true faith, than to keep close to the Creed of Nicea, which they highly eulogized, without adding to or taking from it. They then alluded to the opposition made by Valens and his party, and showed that they had been forced by their conduct to excommunicate them. The Arians, on the other hand, by the deputies whom they sent to the Emperor, prejudiced his mind against the opposite party, and placed before him their formulary of faith, which the orthodox had rejected, but with which Constantius found no fault. Thus when the deputies of the Athanasians * arrived at Constantinople, they were refused an audience, and were for a long time, upon one pretext or other, kept without any answer; the Emperor delaying matters, with the hope that the Bishops, wearied out, and separated from their churches, would at last yield to his wishes, and surrender the terms "substance" and "consubstantial." Further, the Arians having compelled the ten deputies of the Council, in spite of themselves, to come to Nice in Thrace, and having intimidated them by threats, and worn them out by violence and ill-usage, obliged them at last to consent to abandon the two obnoxious expressions, and to receive a confession conformable to that drawn up at Sirmium two years before: in fact, they obliged them to become parties to an act of union with the Arians, and to renounce all that had been done at Ariminum. The Emperor, in the mean time, sent orders to the Prefect, Taurus, not to suffer the Council to separate until this confession, which entirely suppressed the words οὐσία and ὁμοουσιος, had been subscribed by all the Bishops. All of them, with

* "The ten Arians were received with the utmost respect; their rivals with every kind of slight and neglect. Insensibly they were admitted to more intimate intercourse; the flatteries, perhaps the bribes, of the Emperor prevailed: they returned, having signed a formulary directly opposed to their instructions. Their reception at first was unpromising; but by degrees the Council, from which its firmest and most resolute members had gradually departed, and in which many poor and aged Bishops still retained their seats, wearied, perplexed, worn out by the expense and discomfort of a long residence in a foreign city, consented to sign a Creed in which the contested word, the homoousion, was carefully suppressed. Arianism was thus deliberately adopted by a Council, of which the authority was undisputed. The world, says Jerome, groaned to find itself Arian. But on their return to their dioceses, the indignant Prelates everywhere protested against the fraud and violence which had been practised against them. New persecutions followed." (Milman.)

the exception of twenty, gave way to the violence and ill-usage to which they were subjected, and signed this confession of faith, known as the formulary of Nice or Ariminum. In order to induce them the more readily to comply, the Arians endeavoured to persuade them, that they could not, without wrong, reject a scheme of faith produced, as they falsely pretended, by the Oriental Bishops; and added, that if the formulary, in some parts, appeared not sufficiently clear to them, they were at liberty to make what additions they pleased. The orthodox Bishops joyfully availed themselves of this seeming door of escape, and quickly drew up certain propositions, containing a condemnation of Arius, and declaring the equality of the Son with the Father, and his existence from all eternity; but when they were completed, Valens craftily persuaded them to add, that the Son was not a creature like other creatures; thus, in fact, inducing the simple Bishops, who intended nothing less, to acknowledge him to be but a creature. When this triumph over the truth was completed, a deputation, headed by Ursaces and Valens, was sent to Constantius; and the formulary, thus shamefully signed, was circulated throughout the Eastern part of the empire, with orders to exile all who should refuse to sign it; and in this way the signatures of a large number of the Bishops were obtained, some sooner, some later, either through fear, or ignorance, or bribery.*

In the autumn of the year 359, the Council of Seleucia was held by order of Constantius, in which the triumph of Arianism was much more easy than at Ariminum. One hundred and sixty Bishops assembled. The Arians, semi-Arians, and Anomeans, mingled in tumultuous strife, and hurled mutual anathemas against each other. At the very first sitting they openly renounced the Council and the Creed of Nicea. The party of the Anomeans prospered, while Aetius, its author, was banished.† Macedonius was deposed; Eudoxus of Antioch was translated to the imperial see, and the solemn dedication of the church of Sophia was celebrated by a Prelate who denied the similitude of nature between the Father and the Son. The whole Christian world was in confusion: these fatal feuds penetrated almost as far as the Gospel itself had reached. The Emperor, whose alternately partial vehemence and subtlety had inflamed rather than allayed the tumult, found his authority set at nought: a deep, stern, and ineradicable resistance opposed the imperial decrees.‡ A large portion of the empire proclaimed aloud, that there were limits to the imperial despotism; that there was a higher allegiance, which superseded that due to the civil authority; that in affairs of religion they

* Landon, Manual of Councils. See also Labbe, Concilia, tom. ii., col. 791—801.

† Aetius and Eunomius seem to have been the heroes of the historian Philostorgius, fragments of whose history have been preserved by the pious hostility of Photius. This diminishes our regret for the loss of the original work, which would be less curious than a genuine Arian history. Philostorgius seems to object to the anti-materialist view of the Deity maintained by the semi-Arian Eusebius, and, according to him, by Arius himself. He reproaches Eusebius with asserting the Deity to be incomprehensible and inconceivable. (Milman.)

‡ Hilary quotes the sentence of Paul the Apostle: "Ubi fides est, ibi et libertas est;" in allusion to the Emperor's assuming the cognizance over religious questions. (Opera, Hist. Fragm., lib. i., cap. 5.)

would not submit to the appointment of superiors who did not profess their views of Christian orthodoxy. The Emperor himself, by mingling with almost fanatical passion and zeal in these controversies, at once lowered himself to the level of his subjects, and justified the importance which they attached to these questions. If Constantius had firmly, calmly, and consistently enforced mutual toleration ; if he had set the example of Christian moderation and temper ; if he had set his face solely against the stern refusal of Athanasius and his party to admit the Arians into communion ;—he might, perhaps, have retained some influence over the contending parties. But he was not content without enforcing the dominance of the Arian party ; and this was the rock on which he was shipwrecked.*

Constantius was on his way towards Cappadocia from the Persian war when the disease attacked him which caused his death. Trembling at the tidings which were brought him of his nephew Julian, he had resolved to oppose his arms to the progress he was making in the Western provinces. His death probably saved the empire from the miseries of civil war ; but the accession of Julian once more exposed Christianity to the fury of idolaters. The approach of winter could not detain the Monarch at Antioch ; and his courtiers durst not oppose his impatient desire of revenge on Julian, who was judged as conspiring against the throne. A slight fever, which was perhaps occasioned by the excited condition of his feelings, was increased by the fatigues of his journey. Constantius was obliged to halt at the little town of Mopsucrene, twelve miles beyond Tarsus, where he expired, after a short illness, in the forty-fifth year of his age, and the twenty-fourth of his reign,—having received baptism, a little before his death, from Euzoius ; for, after his father's example, he had deferred it till this time.† His character needs no detail : it appeared, from his case, that a weak man, armed with despotic power, was capable of doing incredible mischief in the church of Christ.

The character of the new Emperor was calculated to inspire alarm ; but he for some time concealed, or subdued, the virulency of the dislike with which he regarded the church. Oppressed in his earliest youth by the jealousy of the reigning Princes, it was natural for him to view with hatred the principles which they professed, and to the operation of which he might easily attach the notion of his own misfortunes. As he advanced towards manhood, he found it necessary to dissemble his feelings, and, that he might preserve the precarious dignity he enjoyed, to appear a Christian. Endowed as he was with a most active mind, with strong passions, and a tendency to enthusiasm, this necessity of professing a creed, and practising rites, to conciliate the favour of the man whom he

* Milman, History of Christianity, book iii., chap. 5, vol. iii., p. 48.

† A fact related of him by Theodoret enables us to fix the religious character of this Prince. When he was going to carry on war with Magnentius, he exhorted all his soldiers to receive baptism,—observing the danger of dying without that sacred rite, and ordering those to return home who refused to submit to it. Not infidelity, but superstition, predominated in his mind. Yet how inconsistent, to defer his own baptism so long! (Theodoret., Hist. Eccles., lib. iii., cap. 3.)

both feared and despised, was of all things the most likely to confirm him in disbelief. His first acquisition of power was attended with an announcement of his adherence to the old religion of Paganism. In a letter to the philosopher Maximus, he says, that he publicly and openly worshipped the gods; that as they commanded him to live purely and chastely, so he endeavoured to obey their mandates; and that he trusted to receive great rewards from them, if he should not be slow in their service.* The full possession of imperial authority enabled him to commence the design he appears to have long cherished, of attempting the restoration of idolatry. Having himself set the example of a zealous attention to all its practices, he issued orders for their general observance throughout the empire, directed that the temples which had fallen into ruin should be repaired, and consecrated anew the various ranks of heathen priesthood. The city of Cæsarea early experienced the effects of his ill-concealed intolerance. To revenge the destruction of two temples to Jupiter, which had been many years thrown down, he imposed the most oppressive burdens on the Christians, took possession of the wealth of the church, and compelled the Clergy to enrol themselves in the lowest ranks of the army.† But Julian had too much keenness to persecute without caution; and, unlike his predecessors, pursued his measures with the policy of one whose object it was to root out the religion, rather than take vengeance on those who professed it. Instead of giving the Christians opportunities of showing their constancy and fortitude in suffering, he sought to undermine their faith by a deceitful moderation, and by the application of arts which could excite no immediate alarm.‡ After six years passed in the deserts, and in occasional journeys to visit his flock, Athanasius was encouraged, first, by the death of Constantius, and, secondly, by the accession of Julian, who boasted of his love of toleration, to return to his diocess. He was still further encouraged to do this, by the tidings he received of the death of George of Cappadocia, who had been placed in the episcopal chair of Alexandria by the hand of force, immediately after his expulsion. The violence which had been committed during his absence, rendered his presence in every way needful for the encouragement of his harassed people; and his return was consequently hailed with expressions of universal delight.§

There was that which was truly remarkable in the history of the last of the pagan persecutors of Christianity. Julian, the nephew of Constantine the Great, and son of Basilina, an Arian persecutress, was educated as a Christian by an Arian Bishop, Eusebius of Nicomedia, a relation of his mother. The religion of Julian was of that

* Julian. ad Maxim. apud Baron., Ann. Eccles., A.D. 361.

† Julian commanded that all the Clergy should be enrolled among the troops under the Governor of the province, which is accounted the most arduous and least honourable service among the Romans. He further threatened, that unless their (pagan) temples were speedily re-erected, his wrath would not be appeased, but would be visited on the city, until none of the Galileans remained in existence; for this was the name which, in derision, he gave to the Christians. (Sozomen., Hist. Eccles., lib. v., cap. 4.)

‡ Stebbing, History of the Christian Church, vol. i., p. 176.

§ Ibid., p. 169.

most unphilosophical kind, which permits the human reason to interfere between the evidences and the discoveries of revelation respecting the nature of the Deity. Experience has fully shown, that most persons who are guilty of thus preferring the conclusions of their own minds to the declaration of scriptural truths, gradually retrograde from holding a larger number of the more mysterious articles of their faith, until they lapse into infidelity itself. It is not improbable that Julian was made a Pagan in the age in which he lived, by the same process of reasoning which makes men become Deists in our own day. Instructed in Arianism by Eusebius, for whom he had little respect, he preferred the teaching of the speculative Platonists. Admitted to the office of Reader, he publicly read the Scriptures in the church of Nicomedia. Though he declares, in a letter to the Alexandrians, that he was a Christian till the twentieth year of his age, it was in that very year that he passed at once into Paganism, by being initiated into the mysteries at Ephesus. Four years after this, having passed the intermediate time at Constantinople and Milan, he was sent to study at Athens, where the dying absurdities of Heathenism were dignified by the name of philosophy. Here he was known to Gregory Nazianzen, who predicted his future folly by observing, even there, his affected behaviour, his light carriage and wandering eye, his haughty demeanour, and general impertinence.* Six years after this, Constantius died; and Julian, who had distinguished himself by courage and military conduct, and who had been proclaimed Emperor by his troops, in consequence of his success as a soldier, became Sovereign of the empire. He had written against Christianity; and, amidst all the vanity of that worst of all coxcombry, the coxcombry of philosophy, had displayed great talent, ceaseless energy, and much self-government.† The time, therefore, had now arrived, when the dignity of his situation should have induced him to substitute pride for vanity, and simplicity for affectation. Instead, however, of assuming the majesty of the Judge, and the lofty courtesy of the ruler of the state, he carried with him to the throne the buffoonery of a joking scholar, and satirized the Christians while he treated them with alternate cruelty and insult. Conscious that the former systems of persecution had failed to extirpate Christianity, he had recourse to new plans of action against the religion which he had once embraced, and now renounced and detested. He proclaimed unlimited toleration to all; and, under the mask of freedom and equality, directed his arrows against Christianity. The Pagans were commanded to open their temples for worship. The Arians and other enemies

* "See what a pest the Roman empire nourishes in her own bosom!" (Greg. Nazianz. in Julian., Orat. ii.)

† Julian is the idol of Gibbon, who is, however, compelled to qualify all his praise by acknowledging the truth of the charge of affectation, which was the bane of the Prince. The historian has laboured to the utmost to convince the world that the apostate was a great man; but what can we think of the intellect which rejects the New Testament to consult the augurs, listen to oracles, and prefer the deities of Olympus to the Saviour, whom Julian rejoiced to mention with contempt? Some of Gibbon's choicest insults are to be found in this chapter, as when he speaks of the dull and obstinate understanding of Gallus embracing, with implicit zeal, the doctrines of Christianity.—Chap. xxiii. (Townsend.)

of the church were recalled. If the Emperor had been contented with demonstrations of his impartiality, he might have healed the divisions of his people, and have been recorded to posterity as a benefactor to them, in spite of the foolery which made him sacrifice morning and evening to the moon and stars, and defile his inky fingers with the blood of the panting hearts which his own imperial hands tore forth from the dying victim. But the friend of falsehood is the enemy of truth; and when that enmity exists with the power to display or exert it, no crafty affectation can conceal its efforts. Believing that he was unable to destroy Christianity by the open violence and persecution of his predecessors, he began to assail it in another manner. Every argument which the promise or the actual bestowal of wealth, honour, or advancement could impress upon the wavering, the ambitious, or the timid, was urged upon his Christian subjects, to induce them to follow the example of their Sovereign, and become Pagans. Those who refused compliance were treated, in common with the rest of the Christian community, with a calm and distant scorn, as persons of inferior judgment and weak intellect. They were degraded in public estimation. He commanded them to be called Galileans, unconscious that this epithet would soon prove a title of honour to a people that despised reproach.* He forbade them to teach in schools: he removed them from all offices of rank, honour, and usefulness, and scornfully reminded them of those passages in the New Testament which forbid the followers of Christ from being anxious in the affairs of this world. The Christians were commanded to restore to the Pagans the temples and their revenues; and the latter, as well as the Arians, were encouraged to perplex and injure the orthodox. The name of Christ was erased from the *labarum;* and while the God of Christianity prevented the fulfilment of the attempt of the Emperor to overthrow the testimony of prophecy, by building the temple of Jerusalem,† the oracles of Delos and Delphos, of Dodona, and others,‡ which he had re-established, pro-

* "I cannot learn," says Mr. Townsend, "why Julian so much disliked the word 'Christian.' Was it that he felt the repeating of the word to be a reproach to his apostacy? Gibbon says, somewhere in his notes, that the word 'Christian' was invented at Antioch. This, too, is a sneer against Christianity. He could not be ignorant that the words of the original imply, that the followers of Christ were called Christians by divine command." (Milman.)

† After reading Warburton, Waddington, Lardner, and Gibbon, with their references, the sober Christian must conclude, that the defeat of the enterprise of Julian cannot be called a natural event. (Milman.)

‡ Butler, Lives of the Saints. Libanius, the Pagan, is quoted by Butler as the authority for this affirmation. This same Libanius, when leaving Antioch, derided a Christian Schoolmaster, by asking him what the carpenter's son was then doing. The man replied, "The God who made the world, whom you mock, is making a coffin for your master Julian." The Emperor marched with his army on to Edessa, but would not enter the city, because it was wholly Christian. He proceeded on to Carræ, in Mesopotamia, which city he entered on April 18th, where he performed in secret many execrable pagan rites; which being finished he sealed the doors, and set a guard upon them, commanding that none should open them till his return. It was found, after his death, that his sacrifices consisted of human beings, both at this place and at Antioch; and that, previously to his march to meet the Persians from Carræ, he had been performing with his diviners the rites *ab extis inspiciendis*, on a sacrificed female. (Theodoret., Hist. Eccles., lib. iii., cap. 26, 27.)

mised him victory over the Persians, and bade him prosper. He listened, was persuaded, and perished.*

The education of Julian was certainly misdirected. When about the age of fourteen or fifteen, Julian was shut up, with his brother Gallus, in Macellæ, a fortress in Asia Minor; and committed, in this sort of honourable prison, to the rigid superintendence of Ecclesiastics. By his Christian instructers the young and ardent Julian was bound down to a course of the strictest observances; the midnight vigil, the fast, the long and weary prayer, and visits to the tombs of martyrs, rather than a wise and rational initiation in the genuine principles of the Gospel, or a judicious familiarity with the originality, the beauty, and the depth of the Christian morals and Christian religion. He was taught the virtue of implicit submission to his ecclesiastical superiors; the munificence of conferring gifts upon the churches: with his brother Gallus, he was permitted, or rather incited, to build a chapel over the tomb of Mammas.† For six years, he bitterly asserts that he was deprived of every kind of useful instruction. And though, as we have stated, Julian and his brother were recognised as Readers in the church, the passages of the sacred writings with which he might thus have become acquainted were imposed as lessons; and, in the mind of Julian, Christianity, thus taught and enforced, was inseparably connected with the irksome and distasteful feelings of confinement and degradation. No youths of his own rank, or of ingenuous birth, were permitted to visit his prison: he was reduced, as he indignantly declares, to the debasing society of slaves. At the age of twenty, Julian was permitted to reside in Constantinople, afterwards at Nicomedia. The jealousy of Constantius was excited by the popular demeanour, sober manners, and the reputation for talents, which directed all eyes towards his youthful nephew. He dismissed him to the more dangerous and fatal residence of Nicomedia, in the neighbourhood of the most celebrated and most attractive of the pagan party. The most faithful adherents of Paganism were that class with which the tastes and inclinations of Julian brought him into close intimacy,—the sophists, the men of letters, the rhetoricians, the poets, the philosophers. He was forbidden, indeed, perhaps by the jealousy of his appointed instructer, Ecebolus, who at this time conformed to the religion of the court, to hear the dangerous lectures of Libanius, equally celebrated for his eloquence, and his ardent attachment to the old religion. The conduct of Constantius towards Julian was highly calculated to excite his hostility and rancour. Popular rumour did not acquit Constantius of the murder of Julian's father, and Julian

* See Ammon. Marcell., lib. xxv., cap. 3, who accompanied this expedition into Persia; and also Townsend, Eccles. and Civil Hist., vol. i., p. 414.

† Julian is said even thus early to have betrayed his secret inclinations. In his declamations he took delight in defending the cause of Paganism against Christianity. A prophetic miracle foreboded his future course. While this church rose expeditiously under the labour of Gallus, the obstinate stones would not obey that of Julian; an invisible hand disturbed the foundations, and threw down all his work. Gregory Nazianzen declares, that he had heard this from eye-witnesses. (Greg. Nazianz., Orat., lib. iii., pp. 59, 61; Sozomen., Hist. Eccles., lib. v., cap. 2.)

himself afterwards publicly avowed his belief in this crime. He had probably owed his own escape to his infant age and the activity of his friends. Up to this time, his life had been the precarious and permissive boon of a jealous tyrant, who had inflicted on him every kind of degrading restraint. The personal religion of Constantius; his embarking, with alternate violence and subtlety, in theological discussions; his vacillation between timid submission to priestly authority and angry persecution; were not likely to make a favourable impression on a wavering mind. The Pagans themselves, if we may take the best historian of the time as the representative of their opinions, considered that Constantius dishonoured the Christian religion, by mingling up its perspicuous simplicity with anile superstition. If there were little genuine Christianity in the theological disputations of Constantius, there had been less of its beautiful practical spirit in his conduct to Julian. It had allayed no jealousy, mitigated no hatred; it had not restrained his temper from overbearing tyranny, nor kept his hands clean from blood. And now the death of Julian's brother Gallus, to whom he seems to have cherished warm attachment, was a new evidence of the capricious and unhumanized tyranny of Constantius, a fearful omen of the uncertainty of his own life under such a despotism. He had beheld the advancement and the fate of his brother; and his future destiny presented the alternative, either of ignominious obscurity, or fatal distinction. His life was spared only through the casual interference of the humane and enlightened Empress; and her influence gained but a slow and difficult triumph over the malignant eunuchs who ruled the mind of Constantius. But he had been exposed to the ignominy of arrest and imprisonment, and a fearful suspense of seven weary months. His motions, his words, were watched: his very heart was scrutinized: he was obliged to suppress his natural emotions of grief for the death of his brother; to impose silence on his fluent eloquence, and act the hypocrite to nature as well as to religion. His retreat was Athens, of all cities in the empire, that, probably, in which Paganism still maintained the highest ascendancy, and appeared in the most attractive form.* The political religion of Rome had its stronghold in the capital; that of Greece, in the centre of intellectual culture and of the fine arts. Athens might still be considered the University of the empire: from all quarters, particularly of the East, young men of talent and promise crowded to complete their studies in those arts of grammar, rhetoric, and philosophy, which, however, by no means disdained by the Christians, might still be considered as more strictly attached to the pagan interest. Some Christian students were at the same time dwelling in Athens, among whom were Basil and Gregory. The latter, in the orations with which, in later times, he condemned the memory of Julian, has drawn, with a somewhat coarse and unfriendly hand, the picture of his person and manners. His manners did injustice to the natural beauties of his person, and betrayed his restless, inquisitive, and somewhat incoherent character. The Christian already discerned, in the unquiet and unsubmissive

* Milman, History of Christianity, vol. iii., p. 62.

spirit, the future apostate. But the general impression which Julian made was far more favourable. His quickness, his accomplishments, the variety and extent of his information,—his gentleness, his eloquence, and even his modesty,—gained universal admiration, and strengthened the interest excited by his forlorn and perilous position. Ere long, Julian was elevated to the rank of Cæsar; but this was obtained from the necessities, and not by the esteem, of Constantius, who with cold suspicion thwarted all his measures, crippled his resources, and appropriated to himself, with unblushing injustice, the fame of his victories.*

The death of Constantius prevented the deadly warfare in which the last of the race of Constantine was about to contest the empire. The dying bequest of the empire to Julian, said to have been made by the penitent Constantius, could not efface the recollection of those long years of degradation, of jealousy, of avowed or secret hostility; still less could it allay the dislike or contempt of Julian for his weak and insolent predecessor, who, governed by eunuchs, wasted the precious time, which ought to have been devoted to the cares of the empire, in idle theological discussions, or quarrels with contending Ecclesiastics. The unchristian Christianity of Constantius must bear some part of the guilt of Julian's apostacy. Prior to Julian having assumed the imperial purple, he would have few opportunities of displaying the real sentiments of his mind. But no sooner had he marched into Illyria, an independent Emperor, at the head of his own army, than he threw aside all concealment, and proclaimed himself a worshipper of the ancient gods of Paganism. The army followed the example of their victorious General, and the neglected temples resumed their ceremonies, and the altars again were crowded with victims. The Athenians, in particular, obeyed with alacrity the command of the new Emperor; the honours of the priesthood became again a worthy object of contest; two distinguished females claimed the honour of representing the genuine Eumolpidæ,† and of officiating in the Parthenon. Julian, anxious to infuse as much of the real Christian spirit as he could into reviving Paganism, exhorted the contending parties to peace and unity, as the most acceptable sacrifice to the gods. He commanded that all the pagan temples should be re-opened throughout the East; that those which had been neglected should be repaired; that those which had fallen into ruin should be rebuilt;

* See Ammian. Marcell., lib. xv., cap. 8, et seq.; Socrates, Hist. Eccles., lib. ii cap. 1. The well-known passage in Ammianus shows the real sentiments of the court towards Julian:—"In odium venit cum victoriis suis capella, non homo; ut hirsutum Julianum carpentes appellantesque loquacem talpam, ut purpuratam simiam, et litterionem Græcum." (Ammian. Marcell., lib. xvii., cap. 11.)

† Eumolpidæ,—the most distinguished and venerable among the priestly families in Attica. They were devoted to the service of Demeter, at Athens and Eleusis, and were said to be the descendants of the Thracian bard Eumolpus, who, according to some legends, had introduced the Eleusinian mysteries into Attica. Other members of their family do not seem to have had any particular functions at the Eleusinia, though they undoubtedly took part in the great procession to Eleusis. The Eumolpidæ had, on certain occasions, to offer up prayers for the welfare of the state: and, in case of neglect, they might be taken to account, and punished; for they were, like all other Priests and Magistrates, responsible for their conduct, and for the sacred treasures intrusted to their care.

and that the altars should be restored. He assigned money for this purpose; he restored the customs of antiquity, and the practice of offering sacrifice. He himself offered libations and sacrifices in the temples, bestowed honours on those who were zealous in the performance of these ceremonies, re-established the Priests and Ministers of idols in the enjoyment of their former privileges, and exempted them from the payment of public taxes: he revived the pensions formerly granted to those who guarded the sanctuaries, and commanded them to abstain from certain meats, and from whatever the Pagans represented as inimical to purity. He also commanded that the admeasurements of the Nile and the symbols should be conveyed, according to ancient usage, to the temple of Serapis, instead of being deposited, according to the regulations established by Constantine, in the church. He wrote frequently to the inhabitants of those cities in which the observance of pagan rites was retained, and urged them to proffer any request that they might desire. Towards the Christians, on the contrary, he openly manifested his aversion, refusing to honour them with his presence, to give audience to their deputies, or to listen to their complaints. When the inhabitants of Nisibis sent to implore his aid against the Persians, who were on the point of invading the Roman territories, he refused to assist them, because they would neither re-open their temples, nor resort to the Priests: he would not receive their embassy, and threatened that he would never visit their city, until they returned to Paganism. He likewise accused the inhabitants of Constantius, in Palestine, of attachment to Christianity; and rendered their city tributary to that of Gaza. Constantius was formerly called Majuma, and was used as a harbour for the vessels of Gaza; but, on hearing that the majority of its inhabitants were Christians, Constantine conferred on it the name of his own son, and a separate form of government; for he considered that it ought not to be dependent on Gaza, a city addicted to pagan rites. On the accession of Julian, the citizens of Gaza went to law against those of Constantius. The Emperor decided in favour of Gaza, and commanded that Constantius should be an appendage to that city, although it was situated at a distance of twenty *stadia*. It has since been denominated the maritime region of Gaza. The two cities have now merged into one, under the same Magistrates, chiefs, and public regulations.*

From all, therefore, that we can learn with regard to the motive to which this change in Julian is attributable, it was the hatred which he indulged towards the name and sons of Constantine, owing to the cruelties they had inflicted on his family,—hatred which a young and impetuous disposition might easily extend to their religion. Another reason alleged is, that when he saw the dissensions of the Christians, and their rancour against each other, his faith was perplexed: he found it hard to distinguish the excellence of the religion from the vices of those who professed it, and was unable to prevent his judgment from being blinded by his indignation. Both of them may be true; for it is clear, from some part of his subsequent conduct, that

* Sozomen., Hist. Eccles., lib. v., cap. 3.

his enmity to Christianity was founded on passion, more than on reason; and his hatred of the faith is more prominent than his disbelief of it. Hence it is, that, having renounced one religion, he flew with ardour to the exercise of the other, and sought its aid and alliance against the common adversary. This enthusiasm for Paganism carried him into some ridiculous excesses. It is true, that the affection which he professed for processions and ceremony, and the profuse splendour of his sacrifices, may have proceeded from a wish to seduce and allure the vulgar; but his private devotion to magical rites and the practice of divination, in which his sincerity is not doubted, has no such excuse, and could only have proceeded from an irregular and superstitious mind. Yet to this weakness he united many extraordinary qualities: he was eloquent and liberal, artful, insinuating, and indefatigable; which, joined to a severe temperance, an affected love of justice, and a courage superior to all trials, first gained him the affections, and soon after the peaceable possession, of the whole empire.* A strong attachment to literature distinguished his character, and may have tended to nourish his heathen prejudices; and the passion for glory, which sometimes misled him, was probably the strongest of his passions, and his leading motive of action. The character of Julian has been compared with that of the Emperor Antoninus: if we attempt the contrast, we shall, without fail, find in the latter a thoughtful, consistent, and sober understanding. His principles were the best that heathen philosophy could suggest. His knowledge of Christianity was too partial, and the power of its professors too inconsiderable, to command his belief or respect. He was sensible, also, of the absurdities of Paganism; so that he was content with rigorously and temperately (on most occasions) maintaining the national worship. Julian had more of passion than philosophy in his constitution. He was impetuous, restless, and fearless: he converted into love for the one religion, that which at first was only hatred for the other; and he proceeded daringly to accomplish what he ardently projected. Julian has also been compared with Constantine; but the great difference between them lies here: the religion of Constantine was young and progressive; it stood on principles which proved its excellence, and insured its durability; the only weakness which it acknowledged was that of immaturity. The religion of Julian had for ages been held in derision by all reasonable men: its energy had long passed away from it, and its feebleness was the decrepitude of old age. So that the one led on to certain victory an aspiring assailant; the other endeavoured to rally a shattered, undisciplined, dispirited fugitive.†

Heathenism now everywhere held up its head, and Christianity was openly and systematically insulted; but laws are the least part of what is required from Princes who mean to encourage religion. A plan of conduct, an earnestness of principle, and a system of man-

* The passage is from Warburton; but we have no reason to question the sincerity of that principle in Julian, though it was sometimes overpowered by his religious antipathy.

† Waddington, A History of the Church, vol. i., p. 222.

ners, are needful to support any religious tenets.* Dr. Cave has, with great clearness, illustrated the methods of Julian: we shall therefore avail ourselves of the help which he affords, and also of some other assistance, in order to strip Julian's machinations of every mask, under which he vainly attempted to extinguish Christianity; and if we but change the object, and suppose true religion to be promoted, instead of that which is false, Julian would stand, in prominent bold-relief, a useful preacher to Christian Princes, and would shame that spirit of criminal indifferentism which beclouds the greater part of the political hemisphere of Europe at this moment.

1. Philosophical infidels, in our own times, Mr. Milner observes, when they have found themselves no longer able to support a perfect scepticism, have borrowed some Christian light, called it natural, and endeavoured, by the help of that, to subvert Christianity itself. In Julian this scheme was reduced to a system; and he issued forth precepts for the support of Heathenism, which in his youth he had learned in the Christian school, though he disavows his obligations to his benefactors. The divine excellence of the Gospel, and the extreme malignity of human nature, appear in a very conspicuous light. To reform Paganism itself, was the first object of Julian; but to maintain it on the old system of popular belief, he discovered was utterly impossible. The light of Christianity had rendered pagan darkness visible, its deformity disgusting, and its absurdity contemptible. With great importunity did he exhort Magistrates to correct the vices of men, and relieve their miseries; assuring them that the gods would reward men for their charitable acts; that it is our duty to do good to all, even to the worst of men, and our bitterest enemies; and that public religion should be supported by a reverential adoration of the images of the gods, which were to be viewed as symbols of the gods themselves. Priests, he said, should so live as to be copies of what they preached by their own lives; and dissolute ones should be expelled from their offices. Not only wicked actions, but obscene and indecent language, should be avoided by them. No idle books and wanton plays, but divine philosophy, should be the object of their serious study; they should learn sacred hymns by heart, should pray thrice, or at least twice, every day; and when in their turn called upon to attend the temple, they should never depart from it, but give up themselves to their office. At other times they should not frequent the forum, nor approach the houses of the great, unless with a view of procuring relief for the indigent, or discharging the duties of their office; that in no case they should frequent the theatres, nor ever be seen in the company of a charioteer, player, or dancer. In every city the most pious and virtuous should be ordained, without any consideration of their circumstances. The godly training of their own families, and their compassionate care for the indigent, would be their best recommendation. The impious Galileans, he observed, by their singular benevolence, had strengthened their party, and Heathenism had suffered by the want of attention to these things. Such was the fire which the apostate stole

* Cave, State of Paganism under Julian.—Lives of the Fathers, vol. ii., p. 32.

from heaven, and such his artifice in managing it. The rules, however, deserve the attention of Christian Pastors in all ages, though it may seem wonderful that the Roman High Priest * should not see the divinity of that religion whence he had learned such excellent things, the like to which are not in any degree to be found in Plato, or in any other of his favourite Greeks. He endeavoured, in imitation of Christians, also to erect schools for the education of youth.† Lectures of religion, stated times of prayers, monasteries for devout persons, hospitals and almshouses for the poor and diseased, and for strangers; these things he particularly recommends in a letter to Arsacius, the Chief Priest of Galatia. He tells him what it was that advanced the impious religion of the Christians,—their kindness to strangers, their care in burying the dead, and their affected gravity. He bids him warn the Priests to avoid playhouses and taverns, and sordid employments. Hospitals should be erected in every city for the reception of all sorts of indigent persons. "The Galileans," he observes, "relieve both their own poor and ours."‡ It was not, as will be seen, in the power of Julian to infuse this spirit into his partisans, which alone could produce such excellent fruits. It is vain to think of destroying Christian principles, and at the same time of establishing Christian practice. But here is an additional testimony to the virtues of Christians from their most determined enemy, and as powerful an illustration of the work of God in the first ages of Christianity. It must be confessed, at the same time, that the good sense and penetration of the Emperor are as conspicuous as his malice and impiety.

2. Ridicule was another weapon which the apostate Prince wielded with some effect against Christianity. It is a method of attack which in all ages has been but too successful. Satire, as it is the easiest, so is it the most pleasing, mode of writing: the whole nature of man, prone to indulge ideas of evil, favours the practice; and when written by an Emperor, who might, if he had pleased, have used violence of the most formidable kind, it seemed to be the dictate of generosity. In writing against Christianity, he trod in the steps of Celsus and Porphyry; and, by the few fragments of his work which remain, he appears to have imbibed their spirit. "The Son of Mary," or "the Galilean," were the titles which he gave to the blessed Jesus, and ordered the Christians to be designated accordingly.§ In his treatise of the Cæsars, he asperses his uncle Constantine with much asperity, and represents the Gospel as an asylum for the vilest of mankind. No doubt the enemies of God were delighted in that age with such productions, as they have since been with similar ones of Hume and Voltaire; and many are slow to learn that a serious frame of mind is absolutely necessary for the contemplation of Christianity, and is as favourable

* All the Cæsars were entitled Pontifex Maximus.

† Sozomen., Hist. Eccles., lib. v., cap. 16.

‡ In the same spirit, speaking of the duties of a Priest, he observes, that "the gods have given us great hopes after death, and on them we may with confidence rely." He certainly learnt this language from Christianity, which he ungratefully labours to destroy: a species of behaviour not uncommon to philosophic infidels. (Milner.)

§ Gregor. Nazian., Orat. iii., Opera, tom. i., p. 81; Theodoreti Hist. Eccles., lib. iii., cap. 21; Socrat., Hist. Eccles., lib. iii., cap. 12.

for its reception as a playful spirit is for its exclusion from the mind of man.

3. Julian was extremely politic in weakening the power and interest of Christians.* He made an act of sacrifice the condition of preserving their honour and authority, and thus he either lessened their power or their reputation; and while he carefully avoided a formal persecution, he indirectly persecuted under every plausible pretence he could invent. Whoever had distinguished himself, under the former reigns, in demolishing the monuments of idolatry, felt his heavy hand, and was even put to death on frivolous accusations. The grants made to some subjects from the revenues of heathen temples, furnished a decent opportunity of impoverishing the opulent Christians, and this often with extreme injustice. He seized the treasures of the Arian church at Edessa,† which had assaulted the Valentinian heretics, taunting them with the law of their religion, that being made poor here they might be rich hereafter.‡ Injuries were now committed with impunity against the Christians by the Governors of the provinces; and when the former complained, he had the baseness to turn the knowledge of Christian precepts, which he had imbibed in his tender years, into a cruel sarcasm: "You know what directions of passiveness under injuries your Christ has given you." To this he added an affected encouragement of heretics and sectaries; and thus artfully embroiled the Christian world with factions by toleration of them all, without any real affection for any.

4. It was, however, a refinement of policy far beyond the maxims of that age,§ and a proof of the native sagacity and good sense of Julian, that, young and impetuous as he was, he could abstain from open persecution himself, and yet connive at it in others, who knew what was agreeable to their master. He boasted of mildness in this respect, and contrasted himself with Galerius, and the rest of the persecutors; observing, that they had augmented rather than lessened the number of Christians. "For, give them only occasion," said he, "and they will crowd as fast to martyrdom as bees fly to their hives." Yet a number suffered for the Gospel in his reign, though not by the forms of avowed persecution.

5. The Bishops and inferior Clergy‖ were beheld with an eye of rancour, at once ingenious and determined. In truth, they are in all ages the object of peculiar malevolence to men who love darkness rather than light. Persecuting Emperors and atheistical philosophers unite in this respect. It is the glory of the Christian religion, that it provides popular instruction for the bulk of mankind; where not applause, but spiritual utility,—not ostentation, but holy and virtuous principles and practice,—are the objects of attention. Persecutors desire, that no instruction be instilled into the minds of the people; and philosophers, overlooking the vulgar with proud disdain,

* Sozom., Hist. Eccles., lib. v., cap. 5, 18.

† Julian., Opera, Ep. 43.

‡ Nicephori Hist. Ecclesiast., lib. x., cap. xxiv., p. 53.

§ Chrysostomi Hom. in SS. Matthai, Juven., et Maxim.; Sozom., Hist. Ecclesiast., lib. v., cap. 4.

‖ Sozomen., Hist. Eccles., lib. v., cap. 15.

confine their attention to a few learned men. If the Gospel be indeed the light of heaven, that alone leads men to holiness, which fallen nature abhors, one sees at once why the public teachers of Christianity are abhorred by the proud and the mighty. Julian charged them with seditiousness: had he been a citizen of a free state, he would, with equal falsehood, and with equal malice, have charged them with supporting tyranny. To deprive the church of the inspection of its Pastors, he seized their incomes, abrogated their immunities, exposed them to civil burdens and offices, and occasionally expelled them by fraud or violence. At Antioch the treasures of the church were taken, the Clergy obliged to flee, and the sanctuaries were closed.* The same was done at Cyzicus, without any shadow of sedition. At Bostra he threatened Titus the Bishop, that if any mutiny happened, he should lay the blame on him and his Clergy; and when the Bishop assured him, that though the inhabitants were chiefly Christian, they lived peaceably and quietly under his government, he wrote back to the city, charging him with calumniating their character, and exhorting them to expel him. In other places he found pretences for imprisoning and torturing the Pastors.

6. The vigilant malice of the apostate surveyed every advantage, and seized it with consummate dexterity. Nor can the enemies of the Gospel in any age find a school more fruitful in the lessons of persecution than this before us. A man so perfectly Grecian as this Emperor must have hated or despised the Jews, and Moses must have been as really an object of his derision as Paul the Apostle. But to advance and encourage the Jews in their secular concerns was one of the obvious means of depreciating Christianity.† Hence he spake of them with compassion, begged their prayers for his success in the Persian war, and pressed them to rebuild their temple,‡ and restore their worship. He himself promised to defray the expenses out of the exchequer, and appointed an officer to superintend the work. To strengthen the hands of such determined enemies of Christianity, and to invalidate the Christian prophecies concerning the

* It is certain that the temple of Daphne was burned in the night which terminated the procession of the Christians, who had removed the body of Babylas, a martyr in the Decian persecution, to Antioch from Daphne, where Julian would not suffer it to remain any longer. Julian, in his satire against the people of Antioch, indirectly charged the Christians with the fact, and was glad of the pretence to justify his severities against them. That he suspected them, Ammianus assures us, but gives no grounds to justify the suspicion. The work entitled "Misopogon" rallies the manners of the Antiocheans. Those of the Emperor were austere, and void not only of pomp, but even of decent neatness. Theirs were full of Asiatic luxury. In fact, Christian simplicity had much decayed in this place, where Christians first had the name. Their numbers were immense, but the power of godliness was low. (Milner.)

† Theodoret., Hist. Eccles., lib. iii., cap. 20; Socrat., Hist. Eccles., lib. iii., cap. 20; Sozom., Hist. Eccles., lib. v., cap. 22.

‡ He sent for some of the chief men of their nation, and asked them why they did not sacrifice according to the law of Moses. They told him that they were forbidden to sacrifice except at Jerusalem. He thereupon promises to rebuild their temple; and we have still a letter of his to the community of the Jews, which appears, on the authority of Sozomen, to be genuine. Philostorgius expressly tells us, (Hist. Eccles., lib. vii., cap. 9, 14,) that Julian's design in the rebuilding of Jerusalem was to oppose the prophecies. (Milner.)

desolation of the Jews,* were objects highly desirable, indeed, to the mind of Julian. But the enterprise was suddenly baffled, and the workmen obliged to desist. No historical fact since the days of the Apostles seems better attested. We shall state very briefly the fact itself, and allude to its proofs, then leave the reader to judge whether there ever were reasons to doubt its credibility. Ammianus Marcellinus, a writer of unquestionable credibility, and at least no friend of the Gospel, acquaints us with the attempt, and informs us of its defeat. "He projected the rebuilding of the magnificent temple of Jerusalem. He committed the conduct of the affair to Alypius of Antioch; who set himself to the vigorous execution of the charge, and was assisted by the Governor of the province; but horrible balls of fire breaking out near the foundations, with repeated attacks, rendered the place inaccessible to the scorched workmen from time to time, and the element resolutely driving them to a distance, the enterprise was dropped."† Socrates observes, that, during the progress of this affair, the Jews menaced the Christians, and threatened to retort upon them the evils which they had suffered from the Romans. The Christian evidences for the fact are Gregory Nazianzen, Ambrose, and Chrysostom, who lived at the same time. The three ecclesiastical historians, Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret, who flourished during the next century, give a testimony consistent with one another. To these may be added, Philostorgius the Arian, and the evidence of Jewish Rabbis.‡

* See Matt. xxiii. 38, 39. To restore this people, while yet they continued in their enmity to Christ, was an attempt worthy of an infidel like Julian, and called for a miraculous interposition as plainly as Pharaoh's pursuit of the Israelites at the Red Sea. (Milner.)

† Ammianus Marcell., lib. xxiii., cap. 1.

‡ The whole Jewish world was in commotion: they crowded from the most remote quarters to be present and assist in the great national work. Those who were unable to come envied their more fortunate brethren, and waited in anxious hope for the intelligence, that they might again send their offerings, or make again their pilgrimage, to the temple of the God of Abraham, in his holy place. Their wealth was poured forth in lavish profusion; and all who were near the spot, and could not contribute so amply, offered their personal exertions: blessed were the hands that toiled in such a work; and unworthy was he of the blood of Israel who would not unlock, at such a call, his most secret hoards. Men cheerfully surrendered the hard-won treasures of their avarice: women offered up the ornaments of their vanity. The very tools which were employed were, as it were, sanctified by the service, and were made of the most costly materials: some had shovels, baskets, and mallets of silver, and women were seen carrying rubbish in robes and mantles of silk. Men, blind from the womb, came forward to lend their embarrassing aid; and the aged tottered along the ways, bowed beneath the weight of some burden, which they seemed to acquire new strength to support. The confidence and triumph of the Jews were unbounded: some went so far in their profane adulation, as to style Julian the Messiah. The Christians looked on in consternation and amazement. Would the murderers of the Son of God be permitted to rebuild their devoted city, and the temple rise again from the "abomination of desolation?" Materials had now accumulated from all quarters,—some say, at the expense of the Emperor; but that is not probable, considering the costly war in which he was engaged. Nor were the Jews wanting in ample resources,—timber, stones, lime, burnt brick, clay, were heaped together in abundant quantities. Already was the work commenced, already had they dug down to a considerable depth, and were preparing to lay the foundations, when suddenly flames of fire came bursting from the centre of the hill, accompanied with terrific explosions. The affrighted workmen fled on all sides, and the labours were suspended at once by this unforeseen and awful sign. Other circumstances are said to have accompanied this event: an earthquake shook the hill; flakes of fire, which took the form of crosses, settled on the dresses of the workmen and spectators;

7. The suppression of learning among the Christians was another of the objects of Julian's policy. He published a law, that no professor of any art or science should practise in any place without the approbation of the court of that city, and the sanction of the Emperor. With a view to keep the church in ignorance of the arts of reasoning and philosophy, he forbade Christian Schoolmasters to teach Gentile learning, "lest," being furnished, says he, "with our armour, they make war upon us with our own weapons. Our learning is unnecessary to Christians, who are trained up to an illiterate rusticity, so that to believe is sufficient for them; and by this prohibition I only," says Julian, "restored possessions to their proper owners."* The scheme was highly prudent; but it required a great length of time to raise from it any considerable effects.†

8. Philosophy had ever been the determined foe of the Gospel. It behoved the artful persecutor, himself a philosopher, to encourage it as much as possible. He expressed his hearty wishes,‡ that all the books of the wicked Galileans were banished out of the world. But as this was now impossible, he directed the philosophers to bend all their powers against them. Jamblichus, Libanius, Maximus, and others of the philosophic tribe, were his intimate friends and counsellors, and the empire was filled with invectives against the Gospel.§ Its enemies were liberally paid by imperial munificence for their labours, and Julian seemed desirous to put it to the proof, whether indeed "the foolishness of God was wiser than men."

9. Julian made use of ensnaring artifices to draw unwary Christians into compliance with pagan superstitions.‖ He was accustomed to place the images of the heathen gods near his own statues, that those who bowed to the latter might seem to adore also the former. Those who seemed thus to comply, he endeavoured to persuade

and the fire consumed even the tools of iron. It was even added, that a horseman was seen careering among the flames; and that the workmen having fled to a neighbouring church, its doors, fastened by some preternatural force within, refused to admit them. These, however, may be embellishments, and are found only in later and rhetorical writers; but the main fact, of the interruption of the work by some extraordinary and, as it was supposed, preternatural interference, rests on the clear and unsuspicious testimony of the heathen Ammianus Marcellinus. (Milman, History of the Jews; see also Waddington, History of the Church, vol. i., chap. viii., p. 227.)

* In the same strain he says, "If they, the Christian professors, think these authors give a false account of the most honourable things, let them betake themselves to the churches of the Galileans, and expound Matthew and Luke. Yet those of the Christian youth, who please to go to the pagan schools, are not excluded." (Juliani Epist. xlii.) So prudently did he provide for the progress of Hellenism, and for the downfal of Christian knowledge. He charges the Christians with the inconsistency of instructing pupils in classical learning, at the same time that they opposed the heathen mythology. The account of La Bleterie concerning this matter is just, and his observation deserves to be quoted. "To explain the classic authors, to commend them as models of language, of elegance, and taste, to unveil their beauties, &c.; this is not proposing them as oracles of religion and morality. Julian is pleased to confound two things, so different, and to erect, under favour of this confusion, the puerile sophistry which prevails through his whole edict." (Milner.)

† For the facts stated in the above paragraph, see Sozomen., Hist. Eccles., lib. v., cap. 18; Socrat., Hist. Eccles., lib. iii., cap. 12; Theodoret., Hist. Eccles., lib. iii., cap. 8; Gregor. Nazianzen, Oper., Orat. iii., tom. i., p. 97.

‡ Juliani Epistol. ix.

§ Sozomen., Hist. Eccles., lib. iii., cap. 1.

‖ Ibid., lib. v., cap. 17.

into greater concessions: those who refused he charged with treason, and proceeded against them as delinquents. He ordered the soldiers, when they received their donative, to throw a piece of frankincense into the fire in honour of the gods. Some few Christians, who had been surprised into the practice, returned to the Emperor, threw back their donatives, and professed their readiness to die for their religion.* The story of Theodoret deserves to be told more particularly. Julian caused an altar to be placed near himself, with burning coals upon a table, and required every one to throw some incense into the fire before he received his gold. Some, who were aware of the danger, feigned sickness; some, through fear or avarice, complied. But the greater part were deceived. Some of these last, going afterwards to their meals, called on the name of Jesus Christ according to their custom. One of their companions said, in surprise, "What is the meaning of this? You call upon Christ after having renounced him!" "How?" answered the other, astonished. "You have thrown incense into the fire." They instantly tore their hair, rose up from table, and ran into the forum. "We declare it," they cried, "before all the world, we are Christians: we declare it before God, to whom we live, and for whom we are ready to die. We have not betrayed thee, Jesus our Saviour. If our hands have offended, our hearts have consented not. The Emperor has deceived us: we renounce the impiety, and our blood shall answer for it." They then ran to the palace, and throwing the gold at Julian's feet, "Sacrifice us," they say, "to Jesus Christ, and give your gold to those who will be glad to receive it." In a rage he ordered them to be led to execution. The warmth of his temper had well-nigh prevailed over his politic maxims: he recovered himself, however, in time sufficient to countermand the order. He contented himself with banishing them to the distant parts of the empire, forbidding them to reside in cities. Let the reader see here the philosophizing Heathen and the simple Christian, and judge which religion is human, and which is divine. On some occasions Julian would defile the fountains with the Gentile sacrifices, and sprinkle the food brought to market with hallowed water. Christians knew their privilege from Paul the Apostle's well-known determination of the case, yet they groaned under the indignity. Juventinus and Maximinus,† two officers of his guard, expostulated with great warmth against these proceedings, and so provoked his resentment, that he punished them capitally, though, with that caution which never forsook him, he declared that he put them to death, not as Christians, but as undutiful subjects. Jupiter in no age has possessed so zealous a devotee as this Prince, who lived at the close of his religious dominion over mankind. Decius and Galerius, compared with Julian, were mere savages. It is certain, that no ingenuity could have contrived measures more dexterously. Disgrace, poverty, contempt, a moderate degree of severity, checked

* Theodoret., Hist. Eccles., lib. iii., cap. 16, 17. This account is made up from Theodoret, Sozomen, and Gregory Nazianzen, and gives the sense sufficiently well, though not a close translation. (Gregor. Nazianz., Orat. iii., Opera, tom. i., p. 85.)

† Chrysostom., Homil. in S. S. Mart. Juvent. et Maxim., Opera, tom. v., p. 533, et seq. Ed. Savil.

and disciplined by dissimulation, and every method of undermining the human spirit, were incessantly labouring to subvert Christianity. We do not see how the scheme could have failed, had Providence permitted this prudent and active genius to proceed many years in this course; but what a worm is man, when he sets himself to oppose his Maker!*

About this time the Emperor erased Cæsarea, the large and wealthy metropolis of Cappadocia, situated near Mount Argeus, from the catalogue of cities, and even deprived it of the name of Cæsarea, which had been conferred upon it during the reign of Claudius Cæsar, its former name having been Mazaca. He had long regarded the inhabitants of this city with extreme aversion, because they were zealously attached to Christianity, and formerly destroyed the temple of Apollo and that of Jupiter, the tutelar deity of the city. The temple dedicated to Fortune, the only one remaining in the city, was destroyed after his accession; and, on hearing of the deed, his anger against the Christians exceeded all bounds. He also blamed the Pagans, who were few in number, but who ought, he said, to have hastened to the temple, and to have risked everything in its defence. He caused all property belonging to the churches of the city and suburbs of Cæsarea to be rigorously sought and carried away: about three hundred pounds of gold, obtained from this source, were conveyed to the public treasury. He ordered the Christian populace to be numbered, women and children inclusive, and imposed taxes upon them as onerous as those to which villages are subjected. He further threatened that, unless their temples were speedily re-erected, his wrath would not be appeased, but would be visited on the city, until none of the Galileans remained in existence. There is no doubt that his menaces would have been fully executed, had not death intervened. It is said that, on one occasion, when he was sacrificing in the temple of Fortune at Constantinople, Maris, Bishop of Chalcedon, presented himself before him, and publicly rebuked him as an irreligious man, an atheist, and an apostate. Julian had nothing in return to reproach him with except his blindness, for his sight was impaired by old age, and he was led by a child. According to his usual custom of uttering blasphemies against Christ, Julian added, in derision, "The Galilean, thy God, will not cure thee." Maris replied, "I thank God for my blindness, since it prevents me from beholding one who has apostatized from religion." Julian passed on without giving a reply; for he considered that Paganism would be advanced by the exhibition of greater lenity and mildness towards Christians, than could in ordinary circumstances be expected.†

For similar reasons Julian recalled from exile all Christians who, during the reign of Constantius, had been banished on account of their religious sentiments, and restored to them the property which had been confiscated. He charged the people not to commit any act of injustice against the Christians, not to insult them, and not to constrain them to offer sacrifice. He commanded that, if they should,

* Milner, History of the Church, cent. iv., chap. 8, vol. i., p. 580.
† Sozomen., Hist. Eccles., lib. v., cap. 4.

of their own accord, desire to draw near the altars of Heathenism, they were first to appease the wrath of the demons whom the Pagans regard as capable of averting evil, and to purify themselves by the customary course of expiations. He compelled virgins and widows, who, on account of poverty, were reckoned among the Clergy, to refund the provision which had been assigned to them from public sources. For when Constantine adjusted the temporal concerns of the church, he devoted a portion of the taxes raised upon every city to the support of the Clergy; and, to insure the stability of such an arrangement, he enacted a law, which continued in force sometime posterior to the death of Julian. These exactions were very cruel and rigorous, as appears by the receipts given by the receivers of the money to those from whom it had been extorted, and which were designed to show that the property received in accordance with the law of Constantine, had been refunded. Nothing, however, could diminish the enmity of the Emperor against Christianity. In his hatred against the faith, he seized every opportunity to ruin the church. He deprived it of its property, ornaments, and sacred vessels; and compelled those who demolished temples during the reigns of Constantine and Constantius, to rebuild them, or to defray the expenses of their re-erection. Many of the Bishops, Clergy, and other Christians, were cruelly tortured and cast into prison on this account. It may be concluded from what has been said, that if Julian shed less blood than preceding persecutors, and if he devised fewer punishments for the torture of the body, he was equally averse to the church, and equally intent upon injuring it. He certainly recalled the Priests who had been banished by Constantius; but he was actuated by the desire of introducing division into the church, and increasing the existing disputes. He also contemplated the condemnation of Constantius, whose memory he thought to render odious to all his subjects, by favouring the Pagans, who were of the same sentiments as himself, and by showing compassion to those Christians who had been unjustly persecuted during the preceding reign. He expelled the eunuchs from the Court, because the late Emperor had been well-affected towards them. He condemned Eusebius, the Governor of the palace, to death, from a suspicion he entertained, that it was at his suggestion that Gallus, his brother, had been slain. He recalled Aetius from the region whither Constantius had banished him, on account of suspicions which had been excited against him by the friendship formerly existing between him and Gallus; and to him Julian sent letters full of benignity, and furnished him with a public conveyance, to expedite his return. For a similar reason he condemned Eleusius, Bishop of Cyzicus, under heavy penalties, to rebuild, within two months, and at his own expense, a church belonging to the Novatians, which he had destroyed.*

The reign of Julian furnishes us with numerous instances of individuals who were ready to die "champions for their God." Among these was Basil, A.D. 362. The first circumstance that is recorded of this martyr, is his vigorous opposition to the Arian heresy in the

* Sozomen., Hist. Eccles., lib. v., cap. 5.

time of Constantius. The sacred character of the priesthood engaged him in so strenuous a defence of the orthodox faith, that the Patriarch of Constantinople and those of his party, in a Council of their own held in that city, A.D. 358 or 360, issued an order which forbade to convene or to preach to the people. But this prohibition could not check his zeal: he continued to guard the faithful at Ancyra, the capital of Galatia, where he resided, against the attempts of the enemies of the orthodox faith. The Prelates of that party, however, encouraged him, and he persisted in publishing the truth, at the hazard of all that the world calls valuable. Informations were laid against him to the Emperor as an incendiary, and a disturber of the public peace, and requesting that he might be punished as such. But Constantius was too intent upon his Persian expedition, to give his enemies the satisfaction they required. Basil took this opportunity of enforcing the true faith, and was instrumental in recovering many an Arian from his errors. When Julian was seated on the vacant throne, he declared himself a Pagan, and forthwith endeavoured to re-establish Paganism throughout his dominions. This greatly alarmed the zeal of Basil, who now made it his business to visit every part of the city of Ancyra, and the neighbouring towns, in order to inveigh against idolatrous worship, and to caution the people against all attempts made to introduce so baneful a practice, exhorting them to be courageous in maintaining the faith of God in its purity. We are not surprised that this conduct soon drew the odium of the Heathen upon him: nevertheless, he well knew what was his duty; his profession obliged him to assert the truth, and to preserve the flock of Christ from the dangers with which it was threatened, even at the expense of his life. He therefore proceeded with the same resolution and courage to oppose their attempts, and to do the best he could to defeat the designs of the adversaries of Christianity. Full of concern for the honour of God, as he was one day passing through the streets, he saw the Pagans engaged in sacrifice: he expressed his grief at what he saw by a deep sigh, and prayed that God would vouchsafe to preserve the Christian church from such idolatrous practices. The Pagans around him deeply resented this liberty, seized him, and, in an angry tone, inquired how he dared to inspire men with such sentiments of disrespect to their gods, and endeavour to discourage the religion of their ancestors, which the Emperor was seeking to re-establish. Basil told them, that the destruction of their superstitions was not to be charged upon him: it was the work of Almighty God, who would most certainly exert his irresistible power against them. Here he was interrupted, and hurried away to Saturninus, the Governor of that province, and accused of raising a disturbance in the city, abusing the gods, and affronting the Emperor. Saturninus desired to know his sentiments from his own mouth, and finding him animated with an almost invincible courage in the defence of Christianity, ordered him to be placed upon the rack, and treated according to his crime; but being fatigued with his constancy, he was committed to prison, and Saturninus acquainted Julian with the condition of affairs.

Julian at this time was some small distance from Ancyra, and employed in renewing the superstitious worship of Cybele, the fabulous parent of heathen deities, and actually putting to death those who refused to conform to the new establishment. He purposed to visit Ancyra on his way to Cappadocia, but his zeal for Paganism would not suffer him to delay proceedings against his intended victim till his own arrival: he therefore commissioned Elpidius and Pegasus to go before him, and make farther inquiry into Basil's conduct, and to employ both promises and threats to engage him to renounce the Christian faith. Their efforts were fruitless. They then applied themselves to the Governor, who proposed the usual interrogatories to him again, and also repeated the cruelties which he had suffered before. But he triumphed over them a second time, and the malice of his persecutors only tended to make his triumph the more glorious. A few days after this Julian arrived at Ancyra.* The heathen Priests met him at his entrance into the city, and carried the idol of the goddess Hecate in solemn procession before him. The Emperor was so pleased with this respect shown to him and the gods of his adoration, that, as soon as he reached the palace, he called the Priests together, and distributed large donatives among them. On the following day the public sports were exhibited, and, during the entertainment, Elpidius made his report to Julian respecting Basil, who was ordered to be brought to the palace at the conclusion of the festivities. The Emperor interrogated the martyr, but found him proof against all that he could say or do. He then predicted the death of the Apostate, and the misery with which he would be tormented in the world to come. The Emperor, enraged at his boldness, told him that he was inclined to save his life, and restore him to liberty, but he, by his insolent behaviour, had put that for ever out of his power. He then gave orders for his body to be torn every day in seven different parts, till his whole skin was stripped off; and, leaving the execution of this barbarous sentence to Frumentius, he set out for Antioch. The tortures of Basil immediately commenced, and, after having suffered with wonderful patience the first incisions, he desired to speak with the Emperor. Frumentius would be himself the bearer of his message to Julian, not doubting that Basil intended to comply, and offer sacrifice. Julian instantly ordered that the confessor should meet him in the temple of Esculapius. He there pressed him to join in offering sacrifice. But the martyr replied, that he could never adore blind and deaf idols; and taking a piece of his flesh which had been cut out of his body that day, and still hung thereto by a fragment of skin, he threw it, it is said, upon the Emperor. The

* When Julian arrived at Ancyra, Basil was presented before him; and the crafty Emperor, putting on an air of compassion, said to him, "I myself am well skilled in your mysteries; and I can inform you, that Christ, in whom you place your trust, died under Pilate, and remains among the dead." The martyr answered, "You are deceived: you have renounced Christ at a time when he conferred on you the empire. But he will deprive you of it, together with your life. As you have thrown down his altars, so will he overturn your throne; and as you have violated his holy law, which you had so often announced to the people, (when a Reader in the church,) and have trodden it under your feet, your body shall be cast forth without the honour of a burial, and shall be trampled upon by men." (Butler, Lives.)

Monarch went out in a state of great indignation; and Frumentius, fearing his displeasure, studied how to revenge an insult, for which he seemed responsible to his master. He therefore mounted his tribunal, and ordered the torments of the martyr to be redoubled; and so deep were the incisions made in his flesh, that his bowels were exposed to view, and the spectators wept for compassion. The martyr prayed aloud all the time, and at evening was carried back to prison. Julian set out for Antioch, but would not see Frumentius, who resolved to repair as far as possible his disgrace, or, at least, to discharge his resentment, by exerting his rage upon the servant of Christ. Basil was again produced before the tribunal, and answered Frumentius with great calmness and self-possession.* The officer seemed no longer able to restrain his wrath: he commanded the martyr to be laid down, and his back to be pierced with red-hot iron spikes. Basil expired under these torments.

Basil by no means was the only one who suffered at this period. The Acts of the Martyrs inform us, that Gordian was an inferior Magistrate in Rome; that one Januarius, a Priest, having been brought before him, and accused of being a Minister of the Christian religion, upon his examination Gordian was so affected with the confession of his faith, and his discourse on the subject, that he became a disciple, dismissed his prisoner, and was baptized. The Prefect of Rome, being informed of the circumstance, banished Januarius, and ordered Gordian to be placed under the care of a proper officer, who took great pains to persuade him to renounce the truths of Christianity, but to no purpose. The Prefect, provoked at the disrespectful manner in which Gordian spake of the gods of the empire, which, since the accession of Julian, were again held sacred, ordered him to be severely scourged, and then beheaded. Hard upon the martyrdom of Gordian followed that of John and Paul, brothers, who were united not merely by the bonds of affection and nature, but also by those of grace, and the fellowship of their sufferings for the faith of Christ. It is highly probable that they were born of Christian parents, and had occupied some important offices at court during the reigns of Constantine and Constantius; for we are informed that they fell into disgrace with Julian when they refused to serve him in the same capacity, and conform to his religion. The Captain of his Life-Guards, or household troops, whom some call Terentianus, and others imagine to have been Apronianus, his successor in that post, was a virulent enemy to the Christian name, and embraced every opportunity of persecuting it. He was the most active officer in the present scene. He allowed the brothers, on account of their distinguished characters, ten days for consideration; but finding them, at

* Alban Butler gives a marvellous account of Basil. He represents the martyr addressing Frumentius, and saying, "You know how many pieces of flesh have been torn from my body; yet look on my shoulders and sides, see if any wounds appear. Know that Jesus Christ this night hath healed me. Send this news to your master Julian, that he may know the power of God whom he hath forsaken. He hath overturned his altars, who was himself concealed under them when he was sought by Constantius to be put to death. But God hath discovered to me that his tyranny shall be shortly extinguished with his life." (Butler, Lives of the Saints.)

the termination of that period, as averse to change their faith as they were at the commencement, they were condemned to be beheaded. The sentence is supposed to have been carried into execution in the month of June, 362. Artemius was another of the sufferers. He was the Commander of the forces in the East, at the time when Julian mounted the imperial throne. In that situation it was a part of his duty to assist the Governor in preserving peace among disturbed and mutinous people. The pagan portion of the population at Alexandria, being aware of the Emperor's predilections in respect of religion, thought this a favourable opportunity of pursuing their revenge for what they supposed they had suffered during the two preceding reigns. When Julian visited Antioch, their complaints were drawn up, *in formâ*, and laid before him; they were comprised under two heads: that Artemius demolished several of their idols during the reign of Constantine; and that he had assisted George, the Arian, and Bishop of Alexandria, in plundering the temples. When Julian had read the accusation, he commanded the officer to repair to Antioch to answer the charges which were preferred against him by his adversaries. It appeared upon his trial, that he had been particularly active in destroying idolatry, and removing the objects of pagan worship, both under Constantine and his successor, Constantius; a crime which the apostate would by no means forgive, and which could be expiated only by the blood of the offender, who was first deprived of his commission, then he suffered confiscation of his property, after which he was beheaded. The sedition which took place at Alexandria, soon after the death of Artemius, was a sufficient indication of the intention of the idolaters in the execution of that officer: his power, also, was so considerable, that Julian ironically termed him the "King of Alexandria." The Emperor also, writing an account of his proceedings against his General, lays to his charge the death of his brother Gallus: it is, however, well known, that that artful Prince invariably forged imaginary articles against those whom he was determined to destroy on account of religion; but Gallus had been beheaded by the express orders of Constantius, who viewed him as a fiery and insolent Commander, who was at all times ready for any description of rebellion.

Cassianus was a Schoolmaster * at Imola, in the province of Ro-

* The prohibition of human learning, to which we have already alluded, decreed by Julian, induced Apollinarius, the father and the son, to invent something which might stand as a substitute for the loss. (Socrat., Hist. Eccles., lib. iii., cap. 16; Sozomen., Hist. Eccles., lib. v., cap. 18.) The father, a grammarian, wrote in heroics the sacred history, and imitated the Greek tragedians, taking his subjects out of the Scripture. The son, a philosopher, wrote in defence of the Gospel in the form of dialogues, like Plato. Little of these works has come down to us: the prohibition ceasing with the death of Julian, Christian scholars returned to their former studies, and we cannot judge how far the writings of the Apollinarii merited the rank of classics. Ecebolius, a famous sophist at Constantinople, yielded to the caresses of Julian, and returned to Paganism. (Socrates, Hist. Eccles., lib. iii., cap. 13.) After the Emperor's death, he desired to be received again into the church, and, prostrating himself at the entrance, said, "Tread me under foot, like salt that has lost its savour." "I know no more of the man," says Milner, "to enable me to form a just estimate of his character. We may be convinced, however, that a considerable number of true Christians were yet in the church, amidst all its corruptions, by this important fact, that the greater part

magna, and another victim to the sanguinary myrmidons of Julian, whose close attention to the instruction of those under his care had, as usual, for want of better information, made them his insatiable foes. Prudentius, who flourished towards the end of the fourth century, informs us, that, during the period of persecution, the Emperor's officers went to Cassianus, and proposed that he should offer sacrifice to the heathen deities. Upon his refusing to comply with such an outrageous requirement, he was forthwith hurried before the Judge, who, understanding the character of his profession, and being told that the greater portion of the boys of his school had an unconquerable dislike to him, invented a somewhat novel mode of exhibiting his hatred to Christianity, by commanding the pupils to be the executioners of their master. He therefore ordered Cassianus to be stripped of his clothes, his hands tied behind him, and then surrendered to the tender mercies of his scholars, who were instructed to treat him as they thought proper. As soon as he was delivered into their hands, the pupils began to treat him with the most wanton cruelty: some attacked him with rods, others with styles,* which they wielded with so much dexterity and vigour, that they had the satisfaction of beholding Cassianus fall dead at their feet. This tragic event occurred about the year 362. Bonosus and Maximilian also suffered during Julian's reign. On the death of Constantius, they were both officers in the Herculean Guards, and also Christians; who, upon Julian removing the standard of the Cross, and commanding the banners which were constructed by Constantine to be altered, neglected to conform to that order: this was observed by Julian, the uncle of the Emperor, who exceeded even his nephew in his detestation of the religion of Christ, and carried forward the persecution with even more ardour and vigour than were required at his hands. Seeing the old ensigns still in use in that corps, he sent for the two Commanders, and gave them a strict charge to comply without hesitation with the orders of the Emperor, and render also that homage to the pagan idols which he desired; but, like undaunted soldiers of the Cross, without hesitation they declared they could do neither. Julian then acquainted them, that he had the imperial commands to compel their compliance, or to punish their disobedience with death. To which they replied, that they were ready to suffer anything for the sake of their Redeemer. After this attempt upon their constancy, Julian took Bonosus from his companion, and

of public teachers and professors of Christianity chose to quit their chairs rather than to forsake their religion. Proresius ought to be distinguished. Julian had studied under him at Athens, and, from a kindness to his master, excepted him out of the general law. Yet he refused to be thus singled out from his brethren, and retired. Another of them was Victorinus, an African, converted from idolatry in his old age. The manner of his conversion is finely told by Augustine. His rhetorical school was given up on occasion of Julian's edict, and he wrote with zeal in defence of divine truth, though his abilities were inadequate to the work." (Milner.)

* "Styles." They were iron instruments resembling a pencil in size and shape, used for writing upon wax tablets. They were sharpened at one end to a point, for the purpose of scratching the characters upon the wax, while the other end, being flat and circular, served to render the surface of the tablets smooth again, and so to obliterate what had been written. (Smith, Dictionary of Roman Antiquities.)

ordered him to be bound: he then endeavoured to persuade him a second time to renounce the faith, and to conform to the opinion and practice of the Emperor. The martyr replied, that he had received a law from his parents to which he was obliged to adhere; but that he had no acquaintance with the deities whom he had recommended. The Judge then proceeded to threaten him with the most severe punishment, if he should persist in his refusal; and, finding that he could make no impression upon him by persuasion, ordered him to receive three hundred strokes with the *plumbata*, or whips laden with leaden bullets. Whilst he was under the hands of the executioner, Julian annoyed him with several interrogatories, to which he returned no answer, but smiled as if insensible to the blows which were heaped upon him; whereupon the Governor desired him to have some regard for himself, and to speak. At length Bonosus replied, "We adore the living and the true God, and serve him only; but as for the deities which you worship, we know them not." Maximilian was then conducted to the same place, and, upon being interrogated in a similar manner, gave a similar reply; adding, that if the Pagans could prevail with their idols, so as to induce them to speak, and give some proof of hearing the supplications of their votaries, the commands of the Emperor should be forthwith obeyed; appealing, as he did, to the sacred Scriptures, which forbade the worship of all deaf and dumb gods. Incensed at this resolution, notwithstanding the former punishment which Bonosus had suffered, Julian commanded them both to be severely scourged; but they manifested so much tranquillity under that and other torments, that the Heathens were led to designate them magicians; and Julian, finding his labour lost, remanded them to prison. All the bread which was allowed them, during their incarceration, was marked with the Governor's seal, which probably contained an impression of some of the deities of Paganism to which the food had been presented: the confessors refused to touch, taste, or handle it, lest such an act should be misinterpreted, and taken as a mark of their veneration of the idol thus impressed; providentially, the Christians resident in the neighbourhood amply provided other food. On the day appointed for their trial, Sallustius, Prefect of the East, appeared on the bench, accompanied by Julian. After this hearing, during which the martyrs appeared as invincible as before, they were remanded to prison, where they were visited by Hormisdas, brother to Sapor, Emperor of Persia: he was a Christian, and had passed the greater part of his life in the courts of Constantine and Constantius, and found the martyrs in good health and cheerful. Hormisdas encouraged them to persevere. The honour conferred upon these illustrious prisoners by this interview was far from being agreeable to Julian, who immediately ordered them to be brought before him, and asked Bonosus, by what means he contemplated being delivered out of his hands. To which he replied, "By martyrdom." When the Governor told him that he should be delivered to wild beasts, he replied, that his companion and he feared them as little as they feared man, when secure of the divine assistance. Julian then endeavoured to intimidate them

with the prospect of being hurled into the fiery furnace; but nothing could move them. Being, however, apprehensive of the consequences of the moderation of Sallustius towards them, he hastened the sentence, and condemned them both to be beheaded: the Christians who were present at the trial were full of holy indignation, and courageously assured the Governor, that they desired not merely to be spectators of the sufferings of their brethren, but also companions of their martyrdom. Julian was so far from being affected with this declaration, that he was inclined to expose the victims to additional tortures; but Sallustius, though a Heathen, overruled such an intention. Meletius, Bishop of Antioch, and a great concourse of the faithful, accompanied the martyrs to the place of suffering, where they encouraged them to fortitude and steadfastness, and congratulated them upon their happiness in prospect. They received the martyrs' crown A.D. 362.*

The Emperor Julian constituted Apronianus Governor of Rome in 363; and while on his way to that city, he had the misfortune to lose an eye. Being a slave to idolatry, and an undisguised enemy to the Christian name, he imputed this accident to the power of magic, and issued orders for the discovery and the punishment of all who dealt in that art; a common pretence among the Pagans for persecuting the Christians. According to the most authentic accounts, Bibiana was the daughter of Flavian, who had filled some considerable post connected with the government of the country, but was at the present disgraced and dismissed on account of his religious profession, and ultimately died in banishment. His wife, Dafrosa, was for some time confined to her own house with the expectation of being starved to death; but the persecutor either changing his determination, or imagining her to be too long in dying, ordered her to be taken out of the city, and beheaded. Bibiana and her sister, whom the Acts call Demetria, fell into the hands of the pagan Governor, after the death of their parents, and were deprived of all that which they had left to them. It was then imagined, that the miserable condition to which they were reduced would prevail in leading them to renounce the faith; but Almighty God graciously supported them by the abundant communications of his Holy Spirit, and the temptations of hunger and poverty did not shake their confidence. Demetria died suddenly in the presence of Apronianus. The Magistrate finding all his efforts ineffectual to persuade Bibiana to renounce the faith

* Though Julian did not persecute to death by laws, that being directly contrary to his edicts of toleration which he had with so much ostentation and frequency repeated, yet he connived at the fury of the people, and the brutality of the Governors of provinces, who, during his short reign, brought many martyrs to the stake. For he put such into governments whose inhumanity and blind zeal for their country-superstitions were most distinguished. And when the suffering churches presented their complaints to him, he dismissed them with cruel scoffs; telling them their religion directed them to suffer without murmuring. So that we have little reason to doubt what the ancients say of his declared intention, (had he returned victorious from the Persian war,) to subject the whole Christian world to the honester persecution of fire and sword. (Warburton, "Julian; or, a Discourse concerning the Earthquake and fiery Eruption, which defeated that Emperor's Attempt to rebuild the Temple at Jerusalem." Warburton's Works, vol. viii., p. 56, Hurd's edit., 8vo., London, 1811.)

of Christ, placed her in the hands of Rufina, a woman of a wretched character, but extremely artful, who undertook to bring her to a better way of thinking, as she designated apostacy. That agent, instigated by the devil, employed all the softer means she could possibly invent, which were succeeded by blows. Bibiana remained immovable. Apronianus was irritated by her fidelity and fortitude, and forthwith passed upon her sentence of death, to be scourged with the *plumbata* until she expired. The martyr displayed great firmness until the last moment, and died under the hands of the executioners. During the short reign of Julian, which extended not even to two years, the persecution raged from the populace, and the Governors of provinces, in almost every part of the empire; for whatever they practised against the Christians was passed over with impunity. In Palestine many of them were burnt alive; others were stripped naked, had cords tied to their feet, by which they were dragged about the streets, till, their flesh being torn from the bones, they expired in the hands of their tormentors; some were scalded to death, having had boiling water thrown over them; others were stoned; others had their brains beaten out with clubs, and, having been murdered, their remains were burnt to ashes. In Alexandria many were slain by the sword; some were crucified, or stoned; and so strong was the hatred shown to Christianity, that brother spared not brother, fathers their children, or children their parents. In Thrace, Emilianus was burnt at the stake, and Domitius was murdered in a cave, whither he had fled to escape their rage. Cæsarius, the brother of the famous Gregory Nazianzen,* continued to practise physic at the court, as he had done in the former reign. His brother wrote to him, how grievous a thing it was to himself and to their aged father, (the Bishop of Nazianzum, in Cappadocia,) that he should continue in the court of an infidel, seeking worldly greatness. "Our mother," says he, "could not endure the account. Such the weakness of her sex, and such the fervour of her piety, we are obliged to conceal the truth from her." Cæsarius profited by these rebukes, and not all the artifices of Julian could move him. "I am a Christian," said he, "and must continue so." Cæsarius quitted the court, and retired to his pious father, who was as much delighted with his son's conduct, as earthly-minded parents would have been displeased.†

Among the officers of the army was Valentinian, afterwards Emperor. He commanded the guards who attended on Julian. The Emperor one day entered the temple of Fortune, and on each side of the gate stood the door-keepers, who sprinkled with sacred water those who came in. A drop of this water falling on the mantle of Valentinian, he struck the officer with his fist, expressed his resentment at being defiled with the impure water, and tore that part of his mantle.‡ Julian, incensed at his boldness, banished him from his presence, not for his Christianity, as he pretended, but because he

* Gregor. Nazianz., Opera, tom. i., p. 779; Epist. xvii., Orat. x., tom. i., p. 167.

† Milner, History of the Church, vol. i., p. 582, cent. iv., chap. 9.

‡ Sozomen., Hist. Eccles., lib. vi., cap. 6; Theodoret., Hist. Eccles., lib. iii., cap. 16.

had not kept his cohort in good order. Sensible, however, of his merit, he still employed him in the army. There were others who, like Valentinian, defended their Christian profession not with meekness, but wrath. They found, however, the punishment of their folly from Julian, whose partiality and prejudices in favour of Paganism urged him to adopt measures which filled the whole empire with confusion. We are also informed, that at Merum, a city of Phrygia, Amachius, the Governor of the province, ordered the temple to be opened, and the idols to be cleansed. Three Christians, inflamed with holy zeal, says the historian Sozomen, could not bear the indignity; * and rushing during the silence of the night into the temple, they demolished all the images. The Governor in his wrath being about to chastise many innocent persons, the real offenders generously offered themselves for punishment. Amachius gave them the alternative, either to sacrifice or die. They preferred the latter, and suffered death with excruciating tortures; more admirable for fortitude than meekness in their behaviour during their dying scene. Milner does not hesitate to say, there was in this action more of pride than zeal. Christians, having tasted a little of the pleasure of superiority over Paganism in the last two reigns, and being influenced in no high degree by Christian principles in those times, descended again into a state of disgrace and inferiority with much reluctance. In the same spirit at Dorostolis, in Thrace, one Æmilian was cast into the fire † by the soldiers for having overthrown certain altars. Those only who are in the vigorous exercise of spiritual arms can with cheerful patience abstain from such as are carnal when they are under provocation. Yet true Christians might be in a degree overcome by this spirit, and suffer with the love of Christ prevailing in the heart. The commendation bestowed on such conduct by Socrates, shows how much the spirit of Christianity had declined since the days of Cyprian.‡ At Pessinus, in Galatia, on the confines of Phrygia, two young men suffered death in the presence of Julian, but not solely for professing the faith of Christ: one of them had overturned an idol, which so enraged the Emperor, that he was put to death in a most cruel manner, together with his mother, his companion, and also the Bishop of that city.§

It was also about this period that Marcus, the Prelate of Arethusa, suffered, who, by the direction of the Emperor Constantine, had destroyed the idol-temple in that city, and on the site had erected a Christian church. The pagan inhabitants of Arethusa, knowing the hatred of Julian to the Christian name, accused Marcus with being a traitor, and an enemy to the Emperor. The Bishop at first prepared to fly from the rage of his adversaries; but finding that several of his friends were apprehended in his stead, he returned, and voluntarily surrendered himself. The Arethusans seeing the aged Prelate now in their power, and neither pitying his age nor reverencing his per-

* Socrat., Hist. Eccles., lib. iii., cap. 15; Sozom., Hist. Eccles., lib. v., cap. 11.
† Theodoret., Hist. Eccles., lib. iii., cap. 7.
‡ Milner, History of the Church, cent. iv., chap. 9, vol. i., p. 583.
§ Gregor. Nazianz., Opera, Orat. iv., tom. i., p. 133.

son, they stripped him naked, and cruelly beat him, and then thrust him into a common and filthy sewer, after which they employed boys to goad him with pointed sticks, to increase his pain; afterwards they placed him in a basket, and anointed him with honey, and then hung him in the heat of the sun to attract the wasps, bees, and other insects. All this was done with the view of compelling him to rebuild the pagan temple, or to give money wherewith it might be rebuilt; but he refused to do either. They then offered to remit one-half of the amount, provided he would give the other; but he persisting in his refusal, the sum was reduced to a comparatively small amount, when Marcus, without hesitation, told them, that the impiety evinced by an individual in giving the smallest piece of coin for that purpose, was as great as though he were to give his whole fortune. The Bishop bore his sufferings with such astonishing patience, that the Prefect said to Julian, "Is it not a shame, Sir, that the Christians should be so much superior to us, and that an old man, over whom victory would be inglorious, should conquer us?" He was at length dismissed, and a number who had persecuted him attended afterwards to his instructions. The Bishop had saved the life of Julian in the beginning of the reign of Constantius, when all his family were in danger. His character appears to have been that of eminent piety and virtue: as such he is extolled by Gregory Nazianzen, though he had all along supported the Arian party; and considering the entire separation of the Arian from the general church, it is very improbable that Gregory should speak of him so highly as he does, had he not returned to the church, and been in its communion at that time.* Julian expressed no indignation, and ordered no punishment.

Constantinople remained uniformly and contumaciously Christian; but Antioch had been the chief seat of that mingled Oriental and Grecian worship of the sun, which had grown up in all the Hellenistic parts of Asia: the name of Daphne, given to the sacred grove, implied that the fictions of Greece had been domiciliated in Syria. Antioch was now divided by two incongruous, but equally dominant, passions,—devotion to Christianity, and attachment to the games, the theatre, and every kind of public amusement. The bitter sarcasms of Julian on the latter subject are justified and confirmed by the grave and serious admonitions of Chrysostom. By a singular coincidence, Antioch came into collision with the strongest prejudices of Julian. His very virtues, so called, were fatal to his success in his re-establishment of Paganism: its connexion with the amusements of the people, Julian repudiated with philosophic disdain. Instead of attempting to purify the degenerate taste, he had all the austerity of a pagan Monk. Public exhibitions were interdicted to his reformed priesthood: once at the beginning of the year the Emperor entered the theatre, remained in undisguised weariness, and withdrew in disgust. He was equally impatient of wasting his time as a spectator of the chariot-race: he attended, occasionally, out of respect to the presiding deity of the games, saw five or six courses, and retired.

* Theodoret., Hist. Eccles., lib. iii., cap. vii.; Fleury, Hist. Eccles., liv. xv., cap. 17.

Yet Paganism appeared to welcome Julian to Antioch. It had still many followers, who clung to it with fond attachment, especially to its pomps and gay processions. The whole city poured forth to receive him: by some he was hailed as a deity. It happened to be the festival of Adonis, and the loud shouts of welcome to the Emperor were mingled with the wild and shrill cries of the women, wailing that Syrian symbol of the universal deity, the Sun. It might seem an awful omen, that the rites which mourned the departure of the genial deity should welcome his ardent worshippers. The outward appearance of religion must have affected Julian with alternate hope and disappointment. From all quarters diviners, augurs, magicians, enchanters, the Priests of Cybele, and of the other Eastern religions, flocked to Antioch. His palace was crowded with men, whom Chrysostom describes as branded with every crime, as infamous for poisonings and witchcraft. "Men who had grown old in the prisons and the mines, and who maintained their wretched existence by the most disgraceful trades, were suddenly advanced to places of dignity, and invested with the priesthood and sacrificial functions."* The severe Julian, as he passed through the city, was encircled by the profligate of every age, and by prostitutes, with their wanton laughter and shameless language. Among the former the ardent, youthful, and ascetic Preacher probably included all the Theurgists of the philosophic school: the latter describes the festal processions, which no doubt retained much of their old voluptuous character. Julian ascended the lofty top of Mount Casius, to solemnize, under the broad and all-embracing cope of heaven, the rites of Jupiter Philius.† But in the luxurious grove of Daphne, he was doomed to a melancholy disappointment. The grove remained, with all its beautiful scenery, its shady recesses, its cool and transparent streams, in which the heathen inhabitants of Antioch had mingled their religious rites with their private enjoyments. But a serious gloom, a solemn quiet, pervaded the whole place. The temple of Apollo, the magnificent edifice in which the devotion of former ages had sacrificed hecatombs, where the clouds of incense had soared above the grove, and in which the pomp of Oriental worship had assembled half Syria, was silent and deserted. He expected, to adopt his own words,‡ a magnificent procession, victims, libations, dances, incense, boys with white and graceful vests, and with minds as pure and unspotted, dedicated to the service of the god. He entered the temple, and found a solitary Priest, with a single goose for sacrifice. The indignant Emperor poured out his resentment in the bitterest language: he reproached the impiety, the shameful parsimony of the inhabitants, who enjoyed the large estates attached to the temple, and thus neglected its services; § who, at the same time, permitted their wives to lavish their treasures on the infamous Galileans, and on their scandalous banquets, called the *Maiuma*.

* Chrysost. contra Gent.

† The Jupiter Philius, or Caius. This god was the tutelary deity of Antioch, and appears on the medals of the city.

‡ Juliani Misopog., p. 362.

§ Milman, Hist. of Christianity, vol. iii., p. 92.

Julian was not indifferent to the advancement of the pagan interest in other parts of the empire; and Alexandria could not be at peace, while any kind of religious excitement inflamed the minds of men. The character of George, the Arian Bishop of Alexandria, is laden by heathen, as well as by Christian, writers, with every kind of obloquy. His low birth, the base and sordid occupations of his youth, his servile and intriguing meanness in manhood, his tyranny in power, trace, as it were, his whole life with increasing odiousness. Yet, extraordinary as it may seem, the Arian party could find no man of better reputation to fill this important post; and George, the impartial tyrant of all parties, perished, the victim of his zealous hostility to Paganism, by the hands of idolaters at last. A chief cause of the unpopularity of George was, the assertion of the imperial right over the fee-simple of the land on which Alexandria was built. This right was gravely deduced from Alexander the Great. During the reign of Constantius, George had seized every opportunity of depressing and insulting Paganism: he had interdicted the festivals and the sacrifices of the Heathen; he had pillaged the gifts, the statues, the ornaments of their temple; he had been heard, as he passed the sanctuary either of Serapis himself, or of the Fortune of the city, to utter the contemptuous expression, "How long will this sepulchre be permitted to stand?"* He had discovered a cave where the Mithraic mysteries were said to have been carried on with a horrible sacrifice of human life. The heads of a number of youths were exposed, (probably disinterred from some old cemetery near which these rites had been established,) as of the victims of this sanguinary idolatry. These insults and outrages rankled in the hearts of the Pagans. The fate of Artemius, the Duke of Egypt, the friend and abettor of George† in all his tyrannical proceedings, prepared the way for that of the Prelate himself. Artemius was suspected of being concerned in the death of Gallus. He was charged with enormous delinquencies by the people of Alexandria. Whether, as a retribution for the former offence against the brother of Julian, or as the penalty for his abuse of his authority in the government, Artemius was condemned to death. The intelligence of his execution was the signal for a general insurrection of the Pagans in Alexandria. The palace of George was invested by a frantic mob. In an instant he was dragged forth, murdered, trampled under foot, dragged along the streets, and, at length, torn limb from limb. With him perished two officers of the empire, Dracontius, Master of the Mint, and the Count Diodorus; the one accused of having destroyed an altar of Serapis, the other of having built a church. The mangled remains of these miserable men were paraded through the streets on the back of a camel, and, at length, lest they should be enshrined and worshipped as the relics of martyrs, cast into the sea. The Christians, however, of all parties, appear to have looked with unconcern on the fate of this episcopal tyrant, and the general hatred, if it did not excite them to assist in

* Ammian. Marcell., lib. xxiii., cap. 11; Socrates, Hist. Eccles., lib. iii., cap. 2.

† This is he whom moukish ignorance hath exalted into St. George, the Champion of England, against all the rules of history, geography, and common sense.

his massacre, prevented them from attempting to defend him. Julian addressed a letter to the people of Alexandria. While he admitted, in the strongest terms, the guilt of George, he severely rebuked their violence and presumption in thus taking the law into their own hands, and the horrible inhumanity of tearing like dogs the bodies of men in pieces, and then presuming to lift up their blood-stained hands to the gods.* He admitted that their indignation for their outraged temples and insulted deities might naturally madden them to sudden resentment, but they should have awaited the calm and deliberate course of justice, which would have exacted the due punishment from the offender. Julian secured to himself part of the spoils of the murdered Prelate. George had a splendid library, rich not merely in the writings of the Galileans, but, what Julian esteemed as infinitely more precious, the works of the Greek orators and philosophers. The first he would willingly have destroyed, the latter he commanded to be carefully reserved for his own use.† There were, however, not wanting those who published it abroad, that George had been murdered by the Athanasian party; but the letter of Julian to the people of Alexandria, above quoted, abundantly confutes this calumny.‡

Some months subsequent to the death of the Arian Prelate of Alexandria, Athanasius was induced fearlessly to appear in public. The Arians were obliged to hold their meetings in private houses, and the general voice of the people was in favour of the exiled Bishop. Julian knew and dreaded the character of Athanasius, who, during these tumults, had quietly returned to his charge, and resumed his authority over the orthodox Christians of Alexandria. The general edict of Julian for the recall of all exiles contained no exception, and Athanasius availed himself of its protecting authority. Under his auspices, the church, even in these disastrous times, resumed its vigour; and, during the short period he was allowed to appear in public, he acted as a Christian Bishop, treating his enemies with mildness, and relieving the distressed without respect of persons, restoring the custom of preaching on the doctrine of the Trinity, removing those from the sanctuary who had made a traffic of holy things, and gaining the hearts of the people. He held a Council at Alexandria, composed of those who had suffered during the Arian persecution, among whom particular mention is made of Eusebius of Vercellæ. Here those who, contrary to their settled principles, had been beguiled by Arian subtilties to subscribe to what they did not believe, with tears owned how they had been imposed upon, and were received into the church. Here the doctrine of the Trinity was again cleared of the ambiguities which had clouded it, and the Nicene Creed was allowed to be the most accurate and exact. Two schisms§ unhappily rent the church

* "Poterantque miserandi homines ad crudele supplicium devote Christianorum adjumento defendi ni Georgii odio omnes indiscretè flagrabant." (Ammian. Marcell., lib. xxii., cap. 11.)

† Epistola Juliani, xi., p. 378.

‡ Socratis Hist. Eccles., lib. iii., cap. 2, 3; Sozomen., Hist. Eccles., lib. v., cap. 7; Philostorg., Hist. Eccles., lib. vii., cap. 2.

§ Socratis Hist. Eccles., lib. iii., cap. 6, 9; Theodoreti Hist. Eccles., lib. iii., cap. 4; Sozomen., Hist. Eccles., lib. iv., cap. 13; Fleury, Hist. Ecclesiastique, liv. xv., chap. 29.

at this time. The first was at Antioch, where Euzoius the Arian had the chief sway. The followers of Eustathius, the late orthodox Bishop, gave themselves up to Paulinus, a Presbyter; while another party looked on themselves as belonging to Meletius, who had lately returned from exile. Lucifer of Cagliari, on his return through the East from banishment in Egypt, visited Antioch, with the best intentions, and endeavoured to heal the divisions of the church. But by ordaining Paulinus he confirmed the evils which he meant to cure. Meletius had a church without the city, Paulinus was allowed one within the city, while Euzoius, the most popular, possessed himself of the remainder of the sacred edifices; but justice requires us to say, that he exercised his victory with moderation, and, respecting the age, meekness, and piety of Paulinus, he did not deprive him of his little church in the city. A rare instance of moderation in an Arian leader. Lucifer himself was offended that his fellow-sufferer Eusebius would not approve of his conduct at Antioch, and even broke off communion with him. Finding his obstinacy much blamed in the church, he became a schismatic altogether, returned to his own church at Cagliari, in Sardinia, where he died eight years after.* His disciples bore the name of Luciferians; but their influence was small, and their numbers were few. It has ever been the design of history to record what may be useful to mankind. In this view even the faults of the wise and good may be serviceable. The unhappy spirit of faction, in the decline of Christian faith and love, split the small remnant of the faithful in Antioch into two parties, which subsisted some time after the beginning of the next century. Two persons, both of undoubted piety, minister there, and yet cannot heal the mischief. A third, who had distinguished himself for zeal and devotion above many of his age, endeavoured to close the breach, but widened it, and soon, through the impatience of contradiction, took the lead of another party. There was a world of wisdom in the charge of the Apostle John to the church in his old age, "Little children, love one another." The want of it will not fail to be followed by factions, surmises, and endless divisions. The breach once made is more easily

* No man, says Mr. Milner, ever exceeded Lucifer in courage and hardihood of spirit. When in exile for the Nicene faith, he published certain writings, in which he accuses Constantius with the most astonishing boldness. If there were more of the meekness of the Gospel in these writings, it might be proper to quote some parts of them for the edification of the Christian reader; but there is evidently too much of the man, and too little of the saint, in the whole method and spirit of them. Not content with composing these works, he sent a copy of them to the Emperor, who, surprised at his boldness, ordered him to be asked, whether he had really sent them. "Know," answered the intrepid Bishop, "that I did send the book to the Emperor, and, after having again considered it, I do not retract; and when you have examined the reasons for which I have written in this manner, you will find that we have been strengthened by God, so as to expect with gladness the death which is preparing for us." I wonder not that Athanasius highly commends this man: he himself, though in a less degree, partook of the same spirit. It is useful to mark the declensions of the Christian character among even good men. The want of a closer attention to the vital parts of experimental godliness, rendered even the best men in these days too ferocious in their opposition to heretics. Lucifer was consistent throughout: the same temper which appears to have actuated him in his conduct towards Constantius, seduced him into a blamable schism in his latter days; yet, who can deny the sincerity of his love for the truth, and the integrity of his heart? (Milner, Hist. of Church, vol. i., p. 587.)

widened than closed. While the Gospel flourished in name through Antioch, the vices of luxury prevailed amidst the evils of heresy and schism. The church there became the mark of reproach to the Apostate in his satire against their city. We turn with far more pleasure to behold Eusebius of Vercellæ, who returned to his Western bishopric in Italy, where he was received with extraordinary joy.* His labours, and those of Hilary of Poitiers, were serviceable in Italy, Gaul, and, in general, through Europe. There the Arian heresy was suppressed, and peace and unity reigned. False learning and philosophy had not so corrupted the understanding. The Donatists in Africa obtained leave of Julian to recover their churches; and that frantic and turbulent sect proceeded to exercise military violence, an evil with which they had always been infected.†

We have noticed the return of Athanasius to the see of Alexandria, which proved to him to be, notwithstanding numerous professions of toleration on the part of the Emperor, a bed of thorns. The Egyptian Prelate was still exposed to the pitiless peltings of that imperial storm which Julian was anxious to continue, in his persecuting rage against the Christian name and character. The Emperor knew and dreaded Athanasius, under whose superintendence the church, even in these disastrous times, resumed vigour and strength. The Arians, terrified, perhaps, by the hostility of the Pagans, hastened to re-unite themselves to the church; and Julian heard, with bitter indignation, that some pagan females had received baptism from Athanasius. The Emperor expressed his astonishment, not that Athanasius had returned from exile, but that he had dared to resume his see. The Pagan part of the Alexandrian population represented to the persecuting Monarch, that the Egyptian Prelate had corrupted the city and all Egypt, and that, if he continued there, not a Pagan would be left.‡ Julian's affected moderation was tried to the utmost in this case; and the open spirit of persecution, which, contrary to his deliberate maxims, he displayed on this occasion, does immortal honour to the talents and integrity of Athanasius. "I allowed," said Julian, "those Galileans who had been banished, to return to their countries, not to their churches.§ I order Athanasius to leave the city on the receipt of my letter." The Christians wrote to the Emperor, and begged that they might not be deprived of their Bishop. Provoked to see how deeply the love of Christianity was fixed in them, and what progress the Bishop had made in a very little time, Julian answered them, that since Alexander was their founder, and Serapis and Isis their tutelary gods, it was surprising that the corrupted part should dare to call themselves the community. "By the gods," said he, "I am much ashamed that any of you Alexandrians should confess himself a Galilean. You forget your ancient felicity when the whole of Egypt worshipped the gods, and we enjoyed numberless blessings; but those who now introduce this new preaching among

* Socrat., Hist. Eccles., lib. iii., cap. 9, 10; Sozom., Hist. Eccles., lib. v., cap. 13.

† Milner, Hist. of the Church, vol. i., p. 589, cent. iv., chap. 9.

‡ Theodoret., Hist. Eccles., lib. iii., cap. 9; Sozom., Hist. Eccles., lib. v., cap. 15.

§ Epistola xxvi. Juliani. A distinction certainly unfounded, because contrary to the permission granted to all the rest of the Bishops.

you, tell me what good they do your city. Alexander of Macedon, a servant of the gods, was your founder, not at all, by Jupiter, to be put on a level with any of these, or even with the Hebrews, who are far their superiors. The Ptolemies, who cherished your city as a daughter, advanced it to its greatness, not by preaching Jesus Christ, and the doctrine of the execrable Galileans. If you resolve to follow these impostors, agree among yourselves, and desire not to retain Athanasius. Many of his disciples are capable of pleasing itching ears, which cannot be satisfied but by their impious discourses. But if your affection for him is grounded on his skill and shrewdness, (for I hear the man is crafty,) for this reason I expel him from your city. That such an intriguer should preside over the people, is dangerous; one who deserves not the name of a man, a low despicable creature, who takes a pride in hazarding his life, and is fit only to cause disturbances in society." To hasten the execution of his order, Julian wrote to the Governor of Egypt, that if he did not expel Athanasius by a certain time, which he specified, he would fine his officers one hundred pounds of gold. "I am deeply afflicted," said he, "at the contempt of the gods which is shown by this man: it will be highly agreeable to me if you drive the villain out of Egypt, who, under my government, has had the insolence to baptize Grecian women of quality." The enmity of the carnal mind against God has seldom been more displayed than in these letters concerning Athanasius. It breaks through all disguises, and transgresses all the bounds of prudence and decorum. The affectation, also, of despising a man whom he feared, and whose abilities dismayed him, is completely evident. One sees, in the weakness of his arguments, how incapable even sensible men are of saying anything that has the least tendency to shake the mind of a Christian. We must take every opportunity to show the progress of the Gospel; and as, through the scantiness of materials, a part of our evidence must come from the mouth of enemies, it should be observed, that there is, in the last letter, a confession of the laborious and useful life of Athanasius. He remained not a year in his bishopric after his return; yet in that time he confirmed the faithful in the truth; he demonstrated the power of godliness by kindness, liberality, and mercy to enemies as well as friends; he extended the pale of the church by the conversion of Pagans, some of noble birth; and he merited the indignation, and alarmed the fears, of the Monarch of the Roman world. The Egyptian Prelate was therefore obliged once more to seek safety by flight. All the faithful gathered together around him weeping. "We must retire a little time, friends," said he: "it is a cloud that will soon pass over." He took leave of them, recommending his church to the ablest of his friends; and, going on board a vessel, he fled by the Nile into the obscurer parts of Egypt. Still his life was in imminent danger. The persecutors followed, and were not far from him, which induced Athanasius to use something of that craftiness with which Julian charged him. He directed his companions to return to Alexandria, and to meet his enemies. The pursuers asked them earnestly, "Have you seen Athanasius?" "He is near," say they: "make haste, and

you will soon overtake him." Thus deluded, they went forward with speed in vain; and the Bishop, who had secreted himself during this scene, returned in private to Alexandria, where he lay concealed till the end of the persecution. Thus did the malice of Julian expose this great and good man to use the same sort of artifices which David did, when persecuted by King Saul, who made the same remark as Julian, "It is told me that he dealeth very subtilly;" a conduct which probably extorted from him afterwards that prayer, "Remove from me the way of lying." *

The spirit of Julian was now directed to the destruction of the Persian monarchy; and the pains which he took, and the expense he incurred in sacrifices and auguries, may seem to be incredible. His ardent mind was one of the fittest instruments of Satanic infatuation, and divine Providence was with rapid steps hurrying Julian to the crisis of all his projects and his hopes. Basil and Gregory Nazianzen were actively employed at this period in the defence of the church against its subtle adversary. But the Emperor was too deeply infected with the enmity he had imbibed in youth, to be moved by either the piety or the eloquence of Christians. He treated the faithful at Antioch with a severity which was in total contradiction to his boasted system of toleration. Attributing, it is said, the silence of the oracle in the grove of Daphne to the burial of martyrs in that celebrated seat of pagan worship, he directed the coffin of Babylas, the most distinguished of the confessors, to be forthwith removed. The Christians assembled, and bore the remains of the saint, with splendid solemnity, to its new place of interment, the mingled multitude of worshippers chanting, as they proceeded, the psalms which imprecate divine vengeance on the adorers of false gods: "Confounded be all they that worship graven images." Julian ordered the Prætorian Prefect, Sallust, to punish the multitude. He, though a Gentile, reluctantly obeyed, and seized a number of the Christians. One of them, Theodorus, a young man, was so long and so variously tortured, that his life was despaired of; but God preserved him.† Gregory Nazianzen describes the cruelties of Julian at Antioch rather in a rhetorical than in an accurate manner; and speaks also of his horrible incantations, and the cruelties attendant on his superstition. This description is probably exaggerated; but Gregory was both too intelligent and too honest either to have been deceived himself, or to have deceived others altogether. Certain it is that Julian, towards the Christian part of his subjects, was a tyrant; and one instance or two more shall close the account of his severities. Publia, a widow of great reputation, with a number of virgins over whom she presided at Antioch, sang and praised God when Julian was passing by. In particular they sang such parts of the Psalms as expose the wickedness and folly of idolatry. Julian ordered them to hold their peace till he had passed them. Publia, with more zeal than charity, I fear, encou-

* Milner, History of the Church, cent. iv., chap. ix., vol. i., p. 591.

† Ruffinus, the Latin historian, declares, that he saw him a long time after, and asked him whether he felt any pain in his torments. He owned, not much, for a young man stood by him, wiped off his sweat, and encouraged his spirit; so that upon the whole he felt, during his tortures, more pleasure than pain. (Milner.)

raged them, and caused them to sing on another occasion as he passed, "Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered." The Emperor, in a rage, ordered her to be brought before him, and to be buffeted on each side of her face. The effects of passion seem but too visible both in the Emperor and the woman: there is, however, this difference, the one had a zeal for God, the other a contempt.* The history of this period abounds with traditions of miraculous occurrences, a circumstance which may in some measure be accounted for, perhaps, by the consideration that Julian was not less superstitious than powerful, and that the Christians were brought into closer contention with him, respecting objects of mere outward reverence, than they had been with any preceding Emperor. It was hence that, having heard of the statue of Christ, said to have been set up by the woman cured of the issue of blood, at Cæsarea Philippi, he displaced the image of the Saviour to set up his own on the same pedestal; and hence the story of it being hurled down by lightning, and of the miracles wrought at the foot of the statue of Christ.† It was not long after the remains of Babylas had been removed, that fire suddenly fell upon the temple of Apollo at Daphne, and, according to Sozomen, the historian, the roof of the edifice and the statue of the deity were burnt, and the naked walls, with the columns on which the portico and the back part of the building had rested, alone escaped the conflagration. The Christians believed that the prayers of the martyr had drawn down fire from heaven upon the demon; but the Pagans suspected the Christians of having set fire to the place. This suspicion gained ground, and the Priest of Apollo was brought before the tribunal of justice, to render up the names of those who had perpetrated the deed; but though bound, and subjected to the most cruel tortures, he did not name any one. Hence the faithful were more fully convinced than before, that it was not by the act of man, but by the wrath of God, that fire was poured down from heaven upon the temple. Such were the occurrences which then took place. The Emperor, as is conjectured, on hearing that the calamity at Daphne had been occasioned by the martyr Babylas, and on being further informed that the honoured remains of martyrs were preserved in several houses of prayer near the temple of Apollo Didymus, which is situated close to the city of Miletus, wrote to the Governor of Caria, commanding him to destroy with fire all such edifices as were furnished with a roof and an altar, and to throw down from their very foundations the houses of prayer which were incomplete in those respects.‡

Paganism followed with faithful steps, and with eager hopes, the career of Julian on the brilliant outset of his Persian campaign. Some of the Syrian cities through which he passed, Batnæ and Hierapolis, and Carrhæ, seemed to enter into his views, and endeavoured, with incense and sacrifice, to propitiate the gods of Julian. For the last time the Etruscan haruspices accompanied a Roman Emperor; but

* Milner, History of the Church, cent. iv., chap. ix., vol. i., p. 592.
† Stebbing, History of the Christian Church, vol. i., p. 178.
‡ Sozom., Hist. Eccles., lib. v., cap. 20.

by a singular fatality, their adverse interpretation of the signs of heaven was disdained, and Julian followed the advice of the philosophers, who coloured their predictions with the bright hues of the Emperor's ambition. The name of Christ, we have seen, was erased from the *labarum;* and, while the God of Christianity prevented the fulfilment of the attempt of the Emperor to overthrow the testimony of prophecy by building the temple of Jerusalem, the oracles of Delos and Delphos, of Dodona, and others, which he had re-established, promised him victory over the Persians, and bade him prosper. He listened, was persuaded, and perished. Mr. Townsend supposes that if he had returned from his Persian expedition, he would probably have thrown off the assumed gentleness which made him depend on policy and treachery, rather than on force and violence. The common people destroyed the temples of the Pagans wherever they were built. The destroyers who suffered, either by the Pagans who resisted, or by the Magistrates who condemned them, were venerated as martyrs for their faith. Every day increased the separation between the Emperor and the Christians. He regarded them as fanatics; and, if the writers of the age are correct, he swore their destruction, if he returned in safety from Persia. They believed him to be as cruel as he was crafty, and were preparing for more than resistance. They had resolved never to submit again to the dominion of Paganism; and they saw that the severity of Amachius, the Governor of Phrygia, was only a specimen of the manner in which the whole Christian body must expect to be treated, if the Emperor returned in safety. In obedience to the order of the Sovereign, Amachius purified the Heathen temple, and again set up the images which had been thrown down. The Governor resolving to put to death many who were not guilty, the perpetrators of the act came forth from their concealment. The Governor commanded them to sacrifice to the idol. On their refusing to do so, they were tortured, and at length broiled to death on gridirons.* We have seen, however, that this was by no means the only instance of persecution; a fearful omen of the cruelties which, probably, awaited the whole church, should the Emperor return unscathed from the Persian war. Though he could revenge the offence of the people of Antioch by foolish jokes on his dirty nails and undressed beard, yet he could put Theodore on the rack, and show a cruelty of spirit which could not be disguised either by pleasantry or philosophy. He had been accustomed to declare, that he would not persecute the Christians, because he would not encourage the spirit of martyrdom, nor the disposition to venerate criminals as martyrs. Towards the end of his short-lived career, this policy began to be altered. He per-

* "Being seized, they were ordered to expiate the crime they had committed by sacrificing. On their refusal to do this, their Judge menaced them with tortures; but they, despising his threats, being endowed with great courage, declared their readiness to undergo any sufferings, rather than pollute themselves by sacrificing. After being racked with a variety of torments, they were at last laid on gridirons, under which a fire was placed, and thus they were destroyed. But even in this last extremity they gave the most heroic proofs of fortitude, addressing the ruthless Governor thus: 'If you wish to eat broiled flesh, Amachius, turn us on the other side also, lest we should appear but half cooked to your taste.'" (Socrat., Hist. Eccles., lib. iii., cap. 15.)

ceived his efforts, like those of the pagan persecutors before him, to be utterly vain against the spirituality and firmness of the Christians. The discovery, instead of making him retrace his steps, only confirmed him in the obstinacy of his hatred, and increased the grossness of his superstition. His rancour was inflamed against the active, fearless, bold, and uncompromising religion he had forsaken; and there can be little doubt, that the conclusion at which both his eulogists and opponents have arrived, is correct, that these beginnings of actual severity would have terminated in the most relentless and, probably, the most unsparing persecution that had ever yet afflicted the empire, if he had returned in safety from Persia. The religion of Christ could not now have been extirpated. The vine had taken root; and though wild grapes, as well as the ripe rich clusters fit for the Master's use, crowded its branches, it filled the land, and the wild boar of the wood could not now have rooted it up. If the Emperor had persisted in his endeavour to destroy Christianity, he must have waded through the bloodshed of a more fierce civil war than any yet known to history. The empire in such a contest would have become a desert, and the barbarians, descending on the frontiers, would have made a more easy conquest of the desolate provinces, and the wreck of a divided population. The providence of God decreed that it should not be. The learned yet pedantic, the cautious yet imprudent, the brave but rash, the superstitious but not religious, the wise yet foolish, Emperor died, as we shall shortly discover, the death of an honourable and high-minded soldier, in the field of battle in the heart of Persia.* So, indeed, passeth away the glory of the world!

In the midst of war and rumours of war from without, a Council was held at Alexandria to deliberate, with Athanasius and Eusebius, upon their present prospects, and particularly upon the means to be adopted for restoring peace and union to the church of Antioch, where the "orthodox" Christians, who for some time had communicated with the Arians, at length separated from them, and united themselves to Meletius, but could not induce the Eustathians to unite with them. The Prelates who were assembled, applied themselves with great industry to discover the most advisable way to restore order in the church, agitated as it had been by such a tempest of heresy. The Council settled, that those who had been leaders or defenders of the heresy, should be admitted to penance, but that they could not be permitted to retain their clerical office; while those who had been led away by the violence of others, should be allowed to retain their rank, provided they subscribed the acts of the Council of Nice. The pains, however, which the Council, and the Prelate of Alexandria in particular, had taken to procure peace to the church of Antioch, failed, owing to the intemperate behaviour of Lucifer, who had consecrated Paulinus, the chief of the Eustathians; and being offended with Eusebius for finding fault with this act, he rejected the decrees of the Council, and withdrew, first from communion with the Alexandrian Bishop, and afterwards from that of the church, whence arose the

* Townsend, Ecclesiastical and Civil History, vol. i., p. 417.

schism of the Luciferians, which lasted forty years.* But notwithstanding the efforts of the church and the devices of the ungodly, the Emperor was deeply mortified at finding that all his endeavours to secure the predominance of Paganism were ineffectual; for, although the gates of the temples were kept perpetually open, sacrifices were daily presented, and the observance of ancient festivals restored in all the cities, Julian was far from being satisfied, inasmuch as he foresaw, that on the withdrawal of his influence, a change in the aspect of affairs would speedily take place. He was deeply chagrined on discovering that the wives, children, and servants of many of the Priests of Paganism had been converted to Christianity. On considering that one main support of the Christian religion was the virtuous lives of its professors, he determined to introduce into the pagan temples the order and discipline of Christianity, to institute various orders and degrees of ministry, to appoint readers and teachers to give instruction in pagan doctrines, and to command that prayers should be offered on certain days at stated hours. He moreover resolved to found monasteries for the accommodation of men and women who desired to live in philosophical retirement; and likewise hospitals for the relief of strangers and of the poor, and for other philanthropical purposes. He wished to introduce among the Pagans the system of penance for voluntary and involuntary transgressions; but the point of ecclesiastical discipline which he chiefly admired, and desired to establish, was the custom of the Bishops to give letters of recommendation to those who travelled to foreign lands, wherein they commended them to the hospitality and kindness of other Bishops, in all places and under all contingencies. Thus did Julian strive to engraft the customs of Christianity upon Paganism;† but a more futile and insignificant attempt was never made.

The historian Sozomen relates, that the degrading profanity of the Emperor kept pace with his other acts of impiety and wickedness: he treated with great ignominy and contempt a certain statue of the Saviour; yet Eusebius informs us, that at the base of this statue grew a herb which was unknown to the physicians and empirics, but which was efficacious in the cure of all disorders. "It does not appear a matter of astonishment to me," says Sozomen, "that, after God has vouchsafed to dwell with men, he should condescend to bestow benefits upon them." Legendary stories of a similar nature were numerous,‡ and received with

* Landon, Manual of Councils, p. 22; Labbe, Concilia, tom. ii., col. 97, 808.

† Sozomen, Hist. Eccles., lib. v., cap. 16.

‡ "There is a city now called Nicopolis, in Palestine, which was formerly only a village, and which was mentioned by the holy Evangelists under the name of Emmaus. The name of Nicopolis was given to this place by the Romans, in consequence of the conquest of Jerusalem, and the victory over the Jews. Just beyond the city, where three roads meet, is the spot where Christ, after his resurrection, said farewell to Cleophas and his companions, as if he were going to another village; and here is the fountain in which the Saviour washed his feet, and which has ever since possessed the property of removing every species of disease from man as well as animals! At Ermopolis, in Thebais, is a tree called Persea, of which the branches, the leaves, and the least portion of the bark, are said to heal diseases when touched by the sick; for it is related by the Egyptians, that when Joseph fled with Christ and Mary, the holy mother,

unbounded credulity at this period. Julian had to struggle with almost insurmountable difficulties; all his most important schemes were blighted in the bud; and after his immense army had been brought to the very verge of starvation, he was compelled to sound an ignominious retreat in the presence of an active and exulting foe. The silent hours of the night were yet devoted to study and contemplation; but whenever the Emperor closed his eyes in short and interrupted slumber, his mind was agitated with painful anxiety; in the restless rest which he suffered, the genius of the empire was painted on his imagination, as covering with a funeral veil his head, and then slowly retiring from the imperial tent. The Monarch started from his couch, and, stepping forth to refresh his wearied spirits with the coolness of the midnight air, he beheld a fiery meteor, which shot athwart the sky and suddenly vanished. Julian was convinced that he had seen the menacing countenance of the god of war, and the council which he immediately summoned advised him to abstain from action: this could not be, and the combatants were summoned at break of day. The army marched through a hilly country, and the hills had been secretly occupied by the Persians. The guards of the Emperor reminded him that he was without armour, and conjured him to decline the ruin which evidently awaited him. In a moment he fell mortally wounded,* and was conveyed out of the tumult of the battle to a neighbouring tent.

The pagan historian, Ammianus Marcellinus, who was present, does not relate the circumstance which is mentioned by Sozomen and Theodoret, that the Emperor, finding himself wounded, took of the blood which broke forth from his side, and throwing the warm gore into the air, cried out, "Galilean! thou hast conquered!" It is possible that the conscience of the wounded man, observes Mr. Townsend, at the moment, might have recalled the inward remembrances of his early life; and that although Ammianus might not have heard the words, others of the soldiers might have done so, and have recorded them for the chronicles of a subsequent age. The thoughts of the dying rest on the subject nearest to the soul; and that subject is more certainly developed by an accidental expression in the moment of

from the wrath of Herod, they went to Ermopolis, and, as they were entering the city, this tree bent down and worshipped Christ. I relate precisely what I have heard from many sources concerning this tree. I think that this phenomenon was a sign of the presence of God in the city; or, perhaps, as seems most probable, it may have arisen from the fear of the dèmon, who had been worshipped in this large and beautiful tree by the people of the country; for at the presence of Christ, the idols of Egypt were shaken, even as Isaiah the Prophet had foretold. On the expulsion of the demon, the tree was permitted to remain as a monument of what had occurred, and was endued with the property of healing those who believed. The inhabitants of Egypt and of Palestine testify to the truth of these events which took place among themselves." (Sozomen, History.)

* "No one knows even to this day, by whom this mortal blow, which he had so justly deserved, was inflicted. Some say that it was by one of the invisible order of beings; others, that it was by the hand of an individual belonging to one of the nomadic tribes, generally called Ishmaelites; others say that he was killed by a soldier reduced to despair by hunger, and by wandering in the desert. But whether the sword were that of an angel or of a man, certain it is, that whoever committed the deed, was but the instrument of the divine will." (Theodoret., Hist. Eccles.)

danger or excitement, than in the deliberate and collected farewell. The historian Gibbon informs us, with reference to these traditions, that the legends of more recent saints may be silently despised.* It is possible it may be a legend; but if it be so, it is much less absurd than Julian's dying assurance, that he was about to be united with the stars. The immortality of the Gospel is the continuance of the personal identity of the soul in the society of other spirits who were disembodied before the believer himself. The immortality of Heathenism was an absorption of the consciousness of identity in the substance of the universe. The first is true philosophy; the second is nonsense. The first is the blessing of the Christian, whether he be Prince or peasant; the last was the curse of the dying Julian, of the Heathen, of the Deist, and of the fool. In his last moments, says his great eulogist Gibbon, he displayed, perhaps with some ostentation, the love of virtue and of fame, which had been the ruling passion of his life. He displayed these excellences by summoning to his bed-side his attendants and friends, and addressing them in a speech, in which he dared to utter these words, "I die without remorse, as I have lived without guilt. I am pleased to reflect on the innocence of my past life." Much self-eulogy followed, and some metaphysical discussion with two pagan speculatists, or philosophers. He called for some cold water, and drank, and died.† May God grant to me at that hour to hold other language, and to have other hopes! Let me die the death of the righteous, humble Christian, and not the death of the presumptuous and absurd philosopher. So he died; and believing, as both reason and true philosophy and well-evidenced revelation compel me to believe, in the Providence which governs the world He created, I cannot but see in the example of Julian a memorable proof of that continued government. The last pagan enemy of Christianity was permitted to rule over the empire of Rome at the time when the sun of Christianity was brightening the horizon of the heathen world, that the truth of that faith might be confirmed to the utmost. By re-establishing the oracles, he so demonstrated their folly, that they have never recovered their influence. By endeavouring to refute a prophecy, and fairly challenging the truth of Christianity in the matter of the rebuilding of the temple, he was the cause of a series of events, which compel the boldest infidel to pause before he pronounces the defeat of his attempts to be merely of human origin. By his whole life he showed the weakness of the once all-powerful Paganism. By his death he proved how miserable is the consolation which false philosophy can give, when it calls annihilation immortality, and destroys at once the accountableness, the happiness, and the identity of the soul of man, under the sounding brass and tinkling cymbals of the silly language of that affected wisdom which is based on no evidence, speaks no certain truth, and affords no real happiness, either in life or death; and which, in all these respects, is the contrast to Christianity, and the very antipodes of revelation. Thanks be unto God for the unspeakable gift of a revelation which is proved to be true

* Gibbon, Decline and Fall, chap. xxiv., vol. iv., p. 191.
† Sozomen, Hist. Eccles., lib. vi., cap. 2.

by every moral demonstration which can be required to satisfy the reason; which gives us gratitude to Christ as our motive, the will of God for our guide, and a better consolation in life and death than the remembrance of our own virtues, or the hope of being absorbed in the soul of the universe.*

In his peculiar way Julian stood forward, as the imperial antagonist of Christianity, as an author. He was ambitious, as a writer, of confuting its doctrines, and impeaching its veracity: he passed in his closet the long nights of the winter, and continued, even during his Persian campaign, his elaborate work against the faith of Christ. He seemed, as it were, possessed with an equal hatred of those whom he considered the two most dangerous enemies of the Roman empire, the Persians and the Christians. While oppressed by all the serious cares of organizing and moving such an army as might bring back the glorious days of Germanicus, or of Trajan; while his ambition contemplated nothing less than the permanent humiliation of the great eastern rival of the empire; his literary vanity found time for its exercise, and in all his visions of military glory and conquest, Julian never lost sight of his fame as an author. It appears to have been composed in a purely polemic spirit, with no comprehensive views of the nature of Christianity, and with no consciousness of the utter inefficiency of the cold and incoherent pagan mysticism, which he endeavoured to substitute for the Gospel. But, at least, this was a grave and a serious employment. Whatever might be thought of his success as a religious disputant, there was no loss of dignity in the Emperor condescending to enlighten his subjects on such momentous questions. But when he stooped to be the satirist of the inhabitants of a city which had ridiculed his philosophy, and rejected his religion, the finest and most elegant irony, the keenest and most delicate wit, would scarcely have justified this compromise of the imperial majesty. One of his principal works† was entitled, "The Misopogon, or Beard-Hater," which seems to have been composed in consequence of certain scurrilous writings which had appeared in Antioch, reflecting severely upon his personal rusticity. There is doubtless much felicity of sarcasm and justice in his animadversions on the dissolute manners, the ingratitude for his liberality, the dislike of his severe justice, the insolence of their contempt for his ruder manners, throughout the "Misopogon;" but it lowers Julian from a follower of Plato to a coarse imitator of Diogenes; it exhibits him as borrowing the worst part of the Christian-Monkish character, the disregard of the decencies and civilities of life, without the high and visionary enthusiasm, or the straining after superiority to the low cares and pursuits of the world. It was singular to hear a Grecian sophist (for such was undoubtedly the character of Julian's writings) extolling the

* Townsend, Civil and Ecclesiastical History, vol. i., p. 419.

† Julian wrote the "Lives of the Emperors," his predecessors, in which we find many pointed remarks and illustrations of their several characters, and especially of their defects: possessing neither the fulness nor impartiality of history, it must nevertheless be considered his most important work. The next in celebrity bore the singular name of "Misopogon." Besides these two works, several epistles and rescripts are extant, which are of greater historical importance.

barbarians, the Celts and Germans, above the polished inhabitants of Greece and Syria. Milner observes, that "a tear of compassion is due to this extraordinary man. He had seen a poor sample of the Gospel in the lives and manners of the family of Constantine, and had suffered deep and cruel injuries from them. Philosophers cautiously watched him when very young, and infused their poison with dexterity. Useful lessons may be learned from history by young persons who, among ourselves, having been educated by Christians of mere formal orthodoxy, are ever prone to be seduced by heretical philosophers; while those who profess the Gospel, are loudly called upon to take care that they express their religious zeal by something more substantial than words and forms. Young minds who are under the influence of unfruitful professors, are seriously warned by the apostacy of Julian to perform with diligence what he neglected; namely, to search the Scriptures for themselves with prayer. Had Julian been as studious of the Greek Testament as he was of Plato, and prayed as earnestly to God through Christ as he did, or seemed to do, to Jupiter and Apollo, he might have escaped the snare of Satan. But men confirm themselves in apostacy and infidelity by hearkening to everything that tends to produce these evils; and they avoid the force of divine truth by contemptuous neglect and indifference." *

CHAPTER III.

Accession of Jovian—General Exultation—His Character—Favours the Interests of the Church—Paganism is at a Discount—Proceedings of the Arians, Donatists, and Novatians—General Toleration—The Standard of the Cross is replaced—Intolerant Proceeding of Magnus rebuked and punished—Athanasius re-appears in Alexandria—Is addressed in an Epistle by Jovian—Who invites him to resume the See of Alexandria—Which is offensive to the Arians—A Deputation wait upon Jovian—Who remains firm—Death of Jovian—Is succeeded by Valentinian—Who associates Valens with him in the Empire—Character of both—Valens ranks among the Orthodox—But is led by Eudoxius, Bishop of Constantinople, to the Side of Arianism—Valentinian is tolerant—Ammianus Marcellinus—Paganism is tolerated—Valens is zealous for Arianism—And persecutes the Orthodox—Prelates are exiled—Barbarities at Antioch—Murder of eighty Ministers—Modestus a Tool of Valens—Rev. H. H. Milman—Savage Ferocity of Valentinian—His Death—Valens again expels the orthodox Prelates from the Churches—Athanasius again flees—The See is filled by Lucius, a Usurper—Death of Procopius—Heroism of numerous Martyrs—Death of Athanasius—Nominates his Successor—Prepares the way for further Persecution—Peter, the orthodox Successor of Athanasius, is imprisoned—And exiled—Euzoius—Tumult in Alexandria—Lucius attacks the Monasteries—Pantonius—Heraclides—Persecution of the Monks—Macarius—Lucius installed by the Help of the Sword—Cruelty of Magnus—And of Palladius—Numerous Monks sent to the Mines—The Goths—Athanaric—Fritigern—Sufferings of Sabas—His Character—Intolerant Proceedings of Athanaric—Unflinching Integrity of Sabas—Persecution increases—Sansala, a Fellow-Sufferer—Atharides—Sabas is tortured—And relieved by a pagan Woman—Martyrdom of Sabas—Idolatry and Superstition of the Goths—Nicetas—Bitter Hatred

* Milner, Hist. of the Church, cent. iv., chap. 4, vol. i., p. 595.

of Athanaric—Numerous Attempts to induce Apostacy—A "noble Army of Martyrs" among the Sufferers of this Period—Valens approaching a Crisis in his Career—Influence of Christianity on the Barbarism of the Age—The Gothic Invasion—Salutary Effects of the Christian Clergy—Basil—Interview of Valens—Efforts of Modestus to shake the Fidelity of the Prelate—Valens succumbs to the Bishop, and presents an Oblation to the Poor—Piety of Terentius—Many Christians murdered amongst the Goths—Eusebius of Samosata—A powerful Adversary of Arianism—His Care of the Church—Machinations of the Arians—An Instance of his Firmness—Council at Antioch—In Disguise he makes the Tour of Syria—Continually frustrates the Schemes of the Arians—Eusebius is banished into Thrace—Perilous Situation of the Messenger—Escapes privately into Exile—Uproar in Samosata—Corresponds with Gregory Nazianzen—And with Basil—Character of Eunomius—Gregory Nyssen—Eunomius is superseded by Lucius—His violent Temper—Evolcius and Antiochus are banished—Paulinus—Defence of Eusebius and Meletius—Peter of Alexandria—Warlike Movements in Thrace—Valens marches against the Goths—He restores the exiled Bishops—Death of Eusebius—His Charity—Progress of the Goths—History of their Movements—Theophilus at the Council of Nice—Ulphilas, Character of—The Goths embrace Christianity—And Arianism—Death of Valens—Succeeded by Gratian—Valentinian the Younger—Theodosius—Murder of Gratian—Ambrose—Rebellion of Maximus—Justina—Ambrose commanded to resign the Churches of Milan—Refuses—And is persecuted by Justina—Valentinian II. dies—Critical Period of Church History—Canons of the Church, part of the civil Law—Priscillian—Persecution and Death of Priscillian—The first Martyr to sectarian Opinions—Theodosius—His Baptism—His intolerant Manifesto—Councils and Emperors govern the Church—Ambrose—Sanguinary Conduct of Theodosius—Bold Conduct of Ambrose—Penitence of the Emperor—Successfully pleads for the Pardon of an Offender—Epiphanius—His Character—His supposed Miracles—Œcumenical Council of Constantinople—Maximus—Canons of the Council—Heresies—Theodosius makes a determined Attack on Paganism—Desecration and Destruction of pagan Temples—Marcellus, Bishop of Apamea—Temple of Jupiter—Martyrdom of Marcellus—Olympus—Temple of Serapis destroyed—And the colossal Statue of Serapis—Acacius, Bishop of Berea—Numerous Heresies—Martyrdom of Heretics—Donatists—Theodosius—Edicts of—Veneration for Martyrs—Death of Theodosius—Pelagius—Honorius—Semi-Pelagianism—Origin of Nestorianism—Cessation of the Agapæ—Doctrines of the Nestorians—Repartees of Sisinius—John Chrysostom—Christianity compromised—Corruption of Manners—Troubles of the Empire—State of the Church—Council of Carthage—Persecution in Persia—Several Prelates deposed—Persecution of a Deaconess—Chrysostom condemned—Character of Innocent—Statue of the Empress—Testimony of Prudentius—Tumult in the Church—Gladiatorial Games prohibited—Death of Chrysostom—Worship of Martyrs—Theodosius the Younger—Pulcheria—Relics of Martyrs—Death of Stilicho—Alaric takes Rome—Vigilantius—Donatists at Carthage—Theophilus, Bishop of Alexandria—Martin of Tours—Progress of Superstition—Martin in the Army—First Monastery in France—His Fanaticism—And Miracles imputed to him—Sulpitius—Pagan Rites introduced—Doubtful Character of Proselytes—Credulity of Sulpitius—Examples—Saint-Worship of Paulinus—Jerome—Early Career of—Character of—Bethlehem—Monastic Institutions—Birth-Place of Vigilantius—Marvellous Tales—His Principles in Danger—Propagation of Falsehoods—Difficulty of studying Scripture—Vigilantius ordained—Abuse of the fourth Century—Apostolical Authority—Vigilantius at Bethlehem—Cradle—Desecration—Extravagant Notions of Celibacy—Vigilantius in the Cottian Alps—Connexion between him and the Waldenses—Gospel professed in the Cottian Alps—Vigilantius condemns numerous Errors—Perished in the Massacre of Barcelona—Dr. Henderson—Jerome—Theodosian Code established—Definition of Heresy—Laws against

—Term "Inquisitor" first used—Final Effort of Paganism—Character of Leo—Aggrandizement of the Roman See—Private Confession—Genseric upon Carthage—Heresy of Eutyches—Councils of Constantinople, Chalcedon, and Ephesus—Vandal Persecution—Martyrdom of Armogastus—Death of Valentinian III.—Numerous Sects—Arians strengthen Rome—Power of the Church—Christianity extends—Edicts against Heresy—Code of Theodosius—Code of Justinian.

AFTER the demise of Julian, the providence of God, to the consummate joy of the Christian world, directed the troops to Jovian, a man of inferior rank, but of talent and integrity, who was elected by the unanimous voice of the army to occupy the vacant throne. The situation of the soldiery, when they thus took upon them to name a Sovereign for the vast empire of which they regarded themselves as the bulwark, was hopelessly gloomy; and the new-made Emperor was obliged to accept a peace which his enemies stigmatized as not less disgraceful to himself than it was ruinous to the state. But whatever were the opinions taken of his conduct by the politicians of the age, the Christians were loud in their expressions of joy at the elevation of a man who had refused, it was said, to accept the diadem from the hands of the soldiers till they had professed themselves ready to renounce the pollutions of Paganism. Nor were they deceived in their hopes. Jovian's earliest attention was directed to the state of the church.* The newly-elected Emperor without hesitation informed his constituents that he was a Christian, and could not hope for divine protection, or the success of their arms, were he to take the command of men trained up in the principles of the late Emperor Julian. The soldiers replied, "You shall command Christians. The oldest of us were trained by Constantine, the next by Constantius; and the reign of Julian has been too short to bind any man among us to his persuasion." On assuming the reins of empire, he immediately wrote to the Governors of the provinces, commanding them to open the churches, and diligently to attend divine worship. He ordered the Nicene canons to be observed; he restored to the Clergy and the churches the gifts, revenues, and privileges which his predecessor had confiscated and abolished; and recalled the Bishops and other exiles from banishment.† Though Christianity alone was publicly to be practised, by an edict which he issued, all had liberty to worship God in whatever way they pleased in their private devotions.‡ On the death of Julian, immediately the temples were everywhere closed; the Priests absconded; the philosophers had quitted the cloak, and resumed their common dress; to so great despair were the Pagans reduced. Within the church, the orthodox and the Arians were everywhere at variance. Antioch was split into three divisions. The Donatists in Africa exercised a turbulence that required the interference of the Magistrate. The Novatians, chiefly faulty in a narrow bigotry and excess of discipline, had kept up some good understanding with the general church, had joined her in the defence of the faith against Arianism, had endured persecution in common with her, while Arianism triumphed; and some of them at

* Stebbing, History of the Christian Church, vol. i., p. 179.
† Townsend, Civil and Ecclesiastical History, vol. i., p. 351.
‡ Theod., Hist. Eccles., lib. iv., cap. 4; Socrat., Hist. Eccles., lib. iii., cap. 24.

Martinium in Paphlagonia had cut in pieces several companies of soldiers, who under Constantius had been sent to oblige them to embrace the heretical creed.* So persuaded was Jovian of the importance of general toleration, that he actually permitted Themistius, an illustrious pagan Magistrate, to harangue before him on the propriety of religious freedom, and the rights of conscience, and to thank him for the liberty which he gave his subjects. Jovian replaced in the standard the figure of the Cross, which Julian had taken away. One Magnus, an officer of note, had burned, by his private authority, the church of Berytus in Phœnicia : the Emperor was very near beheading him ; but contented himself with obliging him to rebuild the church at his own expense.

As soon as Athanasius heard of the demise of Julian, he speedily appeared in Alexandria, to the joy and gladness of his own congregation. An epistle from Jovian confirmed him in his office. A few sentences from this address will at once testify the approbation with which the Emperor viewed the misused and persecuted Prelate. "As we admire beyond expression the sanctity of your life, in which shine forth the marks of resemblance to the God of the universe, and your zeal for Jesus Christ our Saviour, we take you, venerable Bishop, under our protection. You deserve it by the courage which you have shown in the most painful labours, and your contempt of persecutors, and menacing words. Holding in your hands the helm of faith, which is so dear to you, you cease not to combat for the truth, nor to edify the Christian people, who find in you the perfect model of all virtues. For these reasons we recall you immediately. And we order you to return to teach the doctrine of salvation. Return to the holy churches : feed the people of God." This movement on the part of Jovian was truly obnoxious to the Arian portion of the community, who were determined, if possible, to secure the episcopate for an individual of the name of Lucius, a man destitute of even the appearance of piety. Application was made to the Emperor by a deputation of Arians who waited upon him, and Lucius *very* modestly acted the part of spokesman. The friends of Athanasius sent deputies on their part to oppose them. Already was it proved that the interference of Constantine, and subsequently of Constantius, in the expulsion of Bishops from certain diocesses, had established an untoward precedent which was followed frequently. A short extract of the conferences may throw some light on the character of Jovian, and on the state of religion at that time. "We beg your power, your majesty, your piety," say the Arians, "to give us audience." "Who and whence are you ?" "Sir, we are Christians." "Whence, and of what city ?" "Of Alexandria." "What do you desire of me ?" "To give us a Bishop." "I have ordered Athanasius to return to his see." "Sir, this man has been banished many years, for crimes of which he has not been cleared." A soldier of the Emperor's guard interposed : "Sir, give yourself the trouble to examine who these people are : they are the remains of George, the villain who desolated Alexandria." At these words

* Milner, Hist. of the Church, cent. iv., chap. 10, vol. i., p. 600.

Jovian, who was on horseback when they met him, spurred his horse and left them. The Arians were not to be so repulsed: they presented themselves to Jovian a second time. "We have several heads of accusation against Athanasius, which we are able to prove. It is thirty years since he was banished by Constantine and Constantius, of immortal memory." (And in the time of Julian he was an exile.) "The accusations of ten, twenty, thirty years," replied Jovian, "are out of date. I know why he was accused, and how he was banished." A third time Jovian being importuned by the same petitioners, and the deputies of the Athanasians speaking at the same time, the Emperor said, "When all speak together, one cannot understand who is in the right. Choose two persons on both sides: I cannot answer both of you." The Arians begged the Emperor to set over them any person except Athanasius. "I have made inquiries," said he: "he teaches sound doctrine." "It is true, he speaks well; but means ill," answered the Arians. The Emperor replied, "I need no other testimony: if he mean ill, he must give account of that to God: we men hear words; God alone knows the heart." "The Treasurer," said a lawyer, a cynic philosopher, "has taken some houses from me on account of Athanasius." "Is Athanasius responsible for the actions of the Treasurer?" "I have a charge against Athanasius," said another lawyer, named Patalas, a Pagan. "What business," asked the Emperor, "has a Pagan like thee to trouble himself about Christians?" Enraged at the attempt of the Arians to corrupt the eunuchs of the court, he made them to undergo the torture, to discover the length and depth of this intrigue; and threatened to treat his first domestics in the same manner, if they followed similar practices. He established Athanasius in his diocess. The reign of Jovian was short. He was suddenly removed; but not without suspicion of poison. The Christians bewailed him; the Pagans in general spoke well of him: the Arians speedily endeavoured to take advantage of his decease, and the church was once more clothed in sackcloth.*

Valentinian was a man of high rank and character, who had exposed himself to trouble in the time of Julian. He had withdrawn from the army rather than offer even questionable adoration to standards decorated with the symbols of idolatry. He was chosen the successor of Jovian, and immediately associated with himself his brother Valens, to whom he committed the eastern provinces; an imprudent exercise of fraternal affection which was productive of evils Christendom had long and deeply to deplore. Valens, whose mind, it appears, was little qualified for the discussion of abstruse opinions, had hitherto adhered closely to the orthodox faith. By the persuasions of his wife, who had been taught the system by Eudoxius, Bishop of Constantinople, he was induced to examine the doctrines of Arius; and, previously to his setting out for the seat of war in Germany, he received baptism from that Prelate. Valentinian, the Emperor of the West, maintained a calm and uninterrupted toleration, which incurred the reproach of indifference from the Christian

* Milner, History of the Church, vol. i., p. 605.

party; but has received the respectful homage of the pagan historian, Ammianus. The immunities and the privileges of the heathen priesthood were confirmed; and the rites of divination were permitted, if performed without malicious intent. In Rome the vestal virgins maintained their sanctity; the altar of Victory, restored by Julian, preserved its place; a military guard protected the temples from insult; but a tolerant as well as prudent provision forbade the employment of Christian soldiers on this service. Valens was zealous above measure in the support of his new creed: he commenced a series of acts of persecution by banishing all the members of the orthodox party from Constantinople; sending several of the most eminent Bishops into distant exile. Among these were Eusebius, of Samosata, a man so beloved by his people, that he was obliged to employ stratagem to save the officers who apprehended him from destruction; Pelagius of Laodicea, and Meletius of Antioch. Barses, Bishop of Edessa, was the next victim of intolerance; and his banishment was followed by a general attack on the defenceless inhabitants, who, though spared death, were subjected to evils scarcely less to be dreaded. Antioch and other places suffered in a similar manner; and the barbarities of the day are said to have been crowned by the murder of no less than eighty Christian Ministers, by a single contrivance of Arian fury. These victims to the intolerance of the Emperor had ventured to seek him in his palace at Nicomedia, and present a series of written complaints against the agents of his cruelty. Enraged at their temerity, he sent secret orders to Modestus, the Prefect of Edessa, to apprehend and put them to death. The Magistrate, fearing the consequence of an open execution, condemned them to banishment; but the sailors who navigated the vessel in which they were transported, received directions to set fire to the ship when out at sea, and leave them to their fate. The order was punctually executed, and they perished in the flames.*

Both Emperors allowed perfect freedom to the public ritual of Paganism; and both in the East and the West exercised a relentless persecution against magic and unlawful divination. This operated most effectually against the interests of Paganism. "It was the more fatal," says Mr. Milman, "because it was not openly directed against the religion, but against practices denounced as criminal, and believed to be real, by the general sentiment of mankind, and prosecuted by that fierce animosity which is engendered by fear. Some compassion might be felt for innocent victims, supposed to be unjustly implicated in such charges: the practice of extorting evidence or confession by torture might be revolting to those, especially, who looked back with pride and with envy to the boasted immunity of all Roman citizens from such cruelties; but where strong suspicion of guilt prevailed, the public feeling would ratify the stern sentence of the law against such delinquents; the magician or the witch would pass to execution amid the universal abhorrence. The notorious connexion of any particular religious party with such dreaded and

* Stebbing, Hist. of the Christian Church, 12mo., vol. i., p. 182; Milner, Hist. of the Church, vol. i., p. 609; Socrat., Hist. Eccles., lib. iv., cap. 16.

abominated proceedings, particularly if proved by the conviction of a considerable majority of the condemned from their ranks, would tend to depress the religion itself."* Julian greatly encouraged these dark and forbidden practices, against which the persecution of Valentinian was constantly directed. But with Valentinian justice degenerated into savage tyranny. The Emperor kept two fierce bears by his own chamber, to which the miserable criminals were thrown in his presence, while the unrelenting Monarch listened with ferocious delight to their groans.† One of these animals, as a reward of his faithful service to the state, received his freedom, and was let loose into his native forest. Valentinian did not long wield the sceptre, after he had defeated the Germans, and restored tranquillity to the African provinces: he had also been successful in an expedition against the Quadi, whose territories he had laid waste; and afterwards, when giving an audience to their ambassadors, whilst speaking in a very excited manner, he ruptured a blood-vessel, and expired.

Valens, at the solicitation of Eudoxius, ordered the Bishops who had been deposed in the reign of Constantius, and were afterwards restored, to be expelled from the churches. By virtue of this order Tatian, Governor of Alexandria, attempted to drive Athanasius out of that city. The Prelate had the hearts of his people. Long experience of his integrity and virtue, respect for his talents, and compassion for his sufferings, had secured him this the most reasonable and the most glorious of all empires. The Prefect was so sensible of this, that for some time he durst not proceed to execute his orders. At length he broke one night with an armed force into his church, where he generally lodged, and sought for his person in every place, but in vain. Athanasius, probably warned beforehand of the danger, had retired, and remained for four months concealed in his father's sepulchre. This was the fourth time that he had fled from Alexandria. Valens, however, from the dread he seems to have had of the people, ordered him to be recalled; nor could Lucius, the Arian Bishop of that see, prevail upon him to give Athanasius any more trouble.‡ The rebellion of Procopius planted many thorns in the pillow of the Emperor. It was diligently rumoured abroad, that Procopius had been designated as his successor by the expiring Julian, and the astrologers had predicted the elevation of that individual to the greatest height. The magical ceremony of divination, which was denounced before Valens, was Pagan throughout all its dark and mysterious circumstances; and many fell victims to the fears and vengeance of Valens. Procopius met with a cruel end.§ About this

* Milman, History of Christianity, vol. iii., p. 115.

† The Christians did not escape these legal murders, constantly perpetrated by the orders of Valentinian. In Milan, the place where three obscure victims were buried was called Ad Innocentes. When he had condemned the decurions of three towns to be put to death, in a remonstrance against their execution, it was stated, that they would be worshipped as martyrs by the Christians. (Ammian. Marcell., lib. xxvii., cap. 7.)

‡ Milner, Hist. of the Church, vol. i., p. 608.

§ It is probable that a severe persecution might have ensued at this crisis, had not Procopius commenced a civil war. As he possessed the chief authority at Constantinople, he soon collected a large army, and marched against Valens. The latter quitted Syria, and met Procopius near Nacolia, a city of Phrygia, and captured him alive,

time Valens went to Antioch. During his absence Eudoxius died, after having governed the church of Constantinople during the space of eleven years. Demophilus was ordained his successor by the Arian Bishops; but those who followed the Nicene doctrines, believing that the course of events was in their power, elected Evagrius as their Bishop. He had been ordained by Eustathius, who had formerly governed the church at Antioch in Syria, and who, having been recalled from banishment by Jovian, lived in a private manner at Constantinople, and devoted himself to the instruction of those who held his sentiments, exhorting them to perseverance. The Arians were deeply incensed at this ordination, and commenced a violent persecution against those by whom it had been effected. During the Emperor's visit to Antioch, he ejected from the churches of that city and of the neighbouring towns all those who adhered to the Nicene faith: he persecuted them with extreme severity, put many of them to death in a variety of ways, and caused others to be drowned in the river Orontes. Having heard that there was a magnificent church at Edessa, named after the Apostle Thomas, he went to see it. On approaching the edifice, he saw the members of the church assembled for worship without the walls of the city; for they had been deprived of their place of assembly. It is said, that the Emperor was so indignant with the Prefect for permitting these assemblies, that he struck him. Modestus, the Prefect, although he was himself a heretic, secretly warned the people of Edessa not to meet for prayer on the same spot the next day, for he had received orders from the Emperor to punish all who resorted thither; but the people, totally disregarding the threat, assembled, with more than their customary zeal, at the usual place of meeting. Modestus, on being apprized of their proceedings, was undecided as to what measures ought to be adopted, and repaired to the place where they had assembled. A woman, leading a child by the hand, forced her way through the ranks of the army, as if bent upon some affair of importance. Modestus remarked her conduct, ordered her to be stopped, and summoned her into his presence, to inquire the cause of her anxiety. She replied, that she was hastening to the spot where the members of the Catholic church were assembled. "Know you not," replied Modestus, "that the Prefect is on his way thither, for the purpose of condemning to death all who are found upon the spot?" "I have heard so," replied she, "and this is the very reason of my haste; for I am fearful of arriving too late, and thus losing the honour of martyrdom." The Governor having asked her why she took her child with her, she replied, "In order that he may share in the sufferings of the others, and participate in the same reward." Modestus, struck with astonishment at the courage of this woman, went to the

through the treachery of Agilonius and Gomoarius, two of his Generals. Valens put them all to a cruel death; and although he had sworn to show favour to the two Generals, he caused them to be sawn asunder. He commanded Procopius to be fastened by the legs to two trees, which had been bent together by the application of a great force; so that, on the sudden removal of that force, when the trees were left to resume their natural position, the victim was torn in twain. (Sozomen., Hist. Eccles., lib. vi., cap. 8.)

Emperor, and, acquainting him with what had occurred, persuaded him to renounce a design which was neither beneficial nor creditable.*

Athanasius departed from this troublesome life in 373, after he had been Bishop forty-six years. On being desired to nominate a successor, he mentioned Peter, an aged saint, and the faithful companion of his labours. This last act of the deceased Prelate prepared the way for further persecution. We are informed by Sozomen, that the Arians having received early intelligence of the death of Athanasius, Euzoius, Bishop of the Arians at Antioch, and Magnus, the Chief Treasurer, lost no time in seizing and imprisoning Peter, whom Athanasius had appointed to succeed him, and they forthwith transferred the government of the church to Lucius. Thence followed a cruel persecution of the faithful in Egypt; for no sooner had Lucius presented himself in Alexandria, and attempted to take possession of the churches, than he met with great opposition from the people, and the Clergy and holy virgins were accused as the originators of the sedition. Some made their escape, as if the city had fallen into the hands of an enemy: others were seized and imprisoned. Some of the prisoners were afterwards dragged from the dungeons to be torn with iron nails, while others were burnt by means of flaming torches. It seemed wonderful how they could possibly survive the tortures to which they were subjected. Banishment, or even death itself, would have been preferable to such sufferings. Peter the Bishop made his escape from prison, and, embarking on board a ship, proceeded to Rome, the Bishop of which church held the same sentiments as himself. Thus the Arians, though comparatively few in number, remained in possession of the churches. At the same time an edict was issued by the Emperor, enacting, that as many of the followers of the Nicene doctrines should be ejected from Alexandria, and the rest of Egypt, as might be directed by Lucius. Euzoius, having thus accomplished his designs, triumphantly returned to Antioch. This did not satisfy the Arian party. Lucius, the Arian Prelate of Alexandria, contemplated a crusade against the monasteries of the country, especially as they were governed by individuals of undoubted sanctity, and strongly opposed to the heresy of Arius. The leaders of these Egyptian ascetics appear to have been two men of the name of Macarius,† and Pantonius and Heraclides, with other disciples of Antony.

* Sozomen., Hist. Eccles., lib. vi., cap. 18.

† MACARIUS, the Elder, was a celebrated hermit of the fourth century, said to be a disciple of Antony, born at Alexandria in 301 of poor parents. He was first a baker, which trade he pursued till the age of thirty; then being baptized, he retired, and led a solitary life. He passed sixty years in a monastery in Mount Sceta, dividing his time between prayer and manual labour. He died about 391. Fifty homilies in Greek have been attributed to him, which were printed in Paris in 1526, with Gregory Thaumaturgus, in folio; and in 2 vols. 8vo. at Leipsic in 1698.

MACARIUS, the Younger, was a famous Monk, a friend of the preceding, and a native of Alexandria, and had near five thousand Monks under his direction. He was persecuted by the Arians, and banished into an island, where he converted almost all the inhabitants by his preaching, and, as some say, by his miracles. He died in 394 or 395. The Rules of Monks, in thirty chapters, are attributed to him; and a discourse by him, on the death of the just, was published by Tollius, in his "Insignia Itinerarii Italici." (Rose, Biog. Dict.)

Reflecting that the Arians could never succeed in establishing an ascendancy over the Catholic church, unless the Monks could be drawn towards that party, Lucius determined to have recourse to force in order to compel the Monks to embrace his opinion, all gentler measures having been attended with signal failure. But here the machinations of the Emperor were frustrated, inasmuch as the Monks were fully prepared to fall by the sword rather than to apostatize from the Nicene faith. Sozomen, who has a strong predilection for the miraculous, relates, that at the very time the soldiers were about to attack them, a man, whose limbs were withered, and who was unable to stand, was carried to them; and that, when they had anointed him with oil, and commanded him, in the name of Christ whom Lucius persecuted, to arise, and go to his house, he was immediately restored to health and strength. This miraculous cure, if so it were, was intended to manifest the necessity of adopting the sentiments of those whose prayers were heard and answered by the Most High, in opposition to the dogmas of Lucius; but the persecutors of the Monks were not led to repentance by this miracle; on the contrary, they arrested these good men, and conveyed them by night to an island of Egypt, lying in the midst of swamps and marshes. The inhabitants of this place had never heard of the Christian faith, and were devoted to the service of demons; and the locality contained many temples of great antiquity, used for idolatrous purposes. It is also related, that when the Monks landed on the island, the daughter of the Priest, who was possessed of a devil, went to meet them. The girl ran screaming towards them; and the people of the island, astonished at her strange conduct, followed in crowds. When she drew near the ship in which these exiled Ministers were, she flung herself upon the ground, and exclaimed in a loud voice, "Wherefore are you come to us, O servants of the great God; for we have long dwelt in this island without giving trouble to any one? Unknown to men, we have concealed ourselves here, and shut up ourselves within these marshes. If, however, it please you, accept our possessions, and fix your abode here: we will quit the island." Macarius and his companions exorcised the demon, and the girl was restored. Her father and all her house, with the inhabitants of the island, immediately embraced Christianity, and demolished their temple for the purpose of erecting a church. On these occurrences being reported at Alexandria, Lucius was overcome by immoderate grief; and fearing lest he should incur the hatred of his own partisans, and be accused of warring against God and not against man, he sent secret orders for Macarius and his companions to be re-conveyed to their own dwellings in the wilderness. About the same period Didymus, the philosopher, and several other illustrious men, acquired great renown. Struck by their virtue, and by that of the Monks, the people followed their doctrines, and opposed those of the partisans of Lucius. The Arians, though not so strong in point of numbers as the other party, grievously persecuted the church in Egypt.*

In these "wars and rumours of wars," with which the tranquillity

* Sozomen., Hist. Eccles., lib. vi., cap. 20.

of the church was so greatly disturbed, imperial violence prevailed. Euzoius induced Valens to oppose Peter, and Lucius was installed by the power of the sword. Then we behold the insolent cruelty of Magnus,* a Pagan, whom the mercy of Jovian had spared. Many Athanasians were murdered, and many treated with great outrage, whilst Arianism, supported by the civil power, triumphed without control. Nineteen Priests and Deacons, some very old, were seized by Magnus. "Agree, wretches," said the Pagan, "to the sentiments of the Arians. If your religion be true, God will forgive you for yielding to necessity." "Forbear to importune us," they replied: "we do not believe that God is sometimes Father and sometimes not. Our fathers at Nice confessed, that the Son is consubstantial with the Father." Whips and tortures, the grief of the godly, and the insults of Jews and apostates, altered not their determination: they were banished to Heliopolis in Phœnicia. Palladius, a Pagan, the Governor of Egypt, sent many to prison, who had presumed to weep; and, after he had scourged them, sent twenty-three of them, chiefly Monks, to work in the mines. Other scenes of savage cruelty are related: it is tedious and unpleasant, says Milner, to enlarge upon them; but it is a pleasure to behold the fruits of the labours of Athanasius, in the faithful sufferings of so many of his followers.† What a Prelate was Euzoius! his conduct at the present juncture required severe animadversion; otherwise his name deserves to descend into the waters of oblivion, anathematized and forgotten! The piety of Terentius, an officer of Valens, deserves to be recorded. The Emperor, pleased with his services, bade him ask a favour. The man begged the liberty of a place of worship for the orthodox. Valens, in a rage, tore his petition. Terentius, gathering the fragments of the petition, said, "I have received the gift, O Emperor: the Judge of all the earth is judge of my intentions."

Among those who suffered for righteousness' sake was one Sabas, together with a considerable number among the Goths, who had embraced the Christian religion some years previous: they were governed by two Kings, who, with much the greater part of their subjects, continued still Pagans. Fritigern, who governed the Western Goths, was an ally to the Romans, and therefore did not persecute the Christians with violence; while Athanaric, King of the Eastern Goths, who was at war with them, and had been defeated by the Roman forces, fell on his Christian subjects, whom he hated, because they were of the same religion with his enemies. Sabas on this occasion was one who felt the weight of his revenge: he was humble, mild, modest, well-grounded in his religion, and a perfect model of those virtues which should distinguish the professors of the true faith from the rest of the world; was constant in his attendance on divine worship; zealous for the honour and advancement of the church; remarkable for his contempt of riches, and the numerous advantages and pleasures of the present world. Thus armed, he convinced and confounded his idolatrous countrymen, and excited the Christians to

* Theodoret., Hist. Eccles., lib. iv., cap. 22.

† Milner, History of the Church, cent. iv., chap. 11, vol. i., p. 614.

virtue by his discourses and example. All his actions were accompanied by a lively and an ardent charity, which made him surmount all difficulties and human considerations, and to press the word of truth with an undaunted courage, though always with a sweetness that must convince the persons whose instruction and conversion he contemplated. In the year 370, Athanaric * issued orders, that all persons in his dominions should partake of the pagan sacrifices, on which the Christians were required to eat of the meat which had been offered to idols, which would, had they consented, have been deemed an act of apostacy. Those among the Pagans who had relations who were Christians, endeavoured to save them by offering them meat which had not received the idolatrous consecration: the Magistrates were thus imposed upon, and led to believe that all had been accomplished according to their instructions. Sabas, however, was too well acquainted with the principles of the Apostle Paul to imagine that the sin was only to be found in eating: he knew that causing the weak to stumble, and giving the enemies of the faith an advantage over them, also constituted the act criminal and sinful, neither of which consequences could be possibly avoided by any disguise. He not only refused to comply with what was proposed to him, but publicly declared, that those who sheltered themselves under that artifice were not worthy to be called Christians; and thus preserved several from being deceived by this pernicious dissimulation. Those whose good intentions for the service of their friends had projected this scheme in their favour, were so incensed on account of the fidelity of Sabas, that they obliged him to quit the town; but the general esteem in which he was held would not allow the inhabitants of the place to be long without him.

This persecution increased in virulence. Some of the Pagans, desirous of preserving their friends in safety, offered to make a solemn oath, that there was not one Christian in their places of residence. Sabas, who could not endure this officious perjury, went to the place where they were assembled, and boldly cautioned them against such a step, asserting that he was himself an exception. The Heathens persisted, and resolved to screen the remainder from harm, and swore there was but one Christian among them. The Magistrate knew that Sabas was the person: he ordered him before him; and when inquiry was made into his fortune and circumstances, it appeared that the garments in which he was clad constituted nearly the whole of his temporal property, when he was summarily dismissed with great contumely, as an individual altogether unworthy of notice. In 372 the persecution was unabated. Sabas, not willing to expose

* Athanaric, a King of the Visigoths in the fourth century. While this people were located in Thrace, Athanaric was their Judge. He joined in the revolt of Procopius against Valens, and drew upon himself the wrath of the latter, who defeated him in battle in 369. He was afterwards defeated by the Huns; and, losing his ascendancy, he quitted the post he then held of Judge or Governor of his people, and retired into the mountains of Caucaland. On the death of Fritigern, he returned to command the Visigoths, became their King, and entered into hostilities against the Romans; but soon made peace with Theodosius, whom he accompanied to Constantinople in 381. He died in that city the same month, in consequence of his excesses at table. (Biog. Univ.)

himself to the trial without evident occasion and necessity, left the town of his residence to spend the festival of Easter with Sansala, a Christian Priest of great sanctity of life. They spent the first three days in peace, and employments suited to the occasion; but on the third night they were surprised by the arrival of a party of soldiers, commanded by Atharides, the son of one of the first nobility in the land. He knew the character of Sansala, and entered his house, where they seized both him and Sabas, who were in bed. The Priest had time allowed to dress himself, after which he was hurried off in a carriage; but Sabas was taken away in a state of nudity, dragged through thorns and briers, and violently beaten: but the patience of Sabas was even superior to the cruelty of Atharides, and God was pleased to preserve him amidst all their ill-treatment without any external marks of violence. Afterwards they took two beams, and, extending his limbs, they tied his arms to one and his legs to the other, and in that position they left him on the ground, while they went to repose themselves for the evening. The woman of the house where his tormentors were lodged, becoming acquainted how ill he had been used, went and released him: he then employed his temporary liberty in assisting her to prepare a repast for his persecutors. The following morning Atharides ordered his hands to be tied together, and hung him up on a cross-beam, and, bringing Sansala to the same place, thought that a proper time to practise on the fidelity of these two Christians; upon which they presented them some meats, which had been offered to the heathen deities, and declared that eating them was the only way to preserve their lives. The heathen Priests, however, assured these persecutors, that they only lost time and labour in such an attempt; for they had to deal with persons who were prepared to meet the most cruel death that could be invented, rather than commit so detestable an act. Those who were engaged in the affair urged the compliance of the victims, by informing them, that *Lord* Atharides had sent them, and that he anticipated they would be obedient. Sabas, with great magnanimity, answered them, that they knew no *Lord* but the Lord Almighty, and had less reason to fear death from refusing what was offered them than a life which would be as impure and profane as the person by whose authority they were sent. One of the servants of Atharides, who was standing by, heard this severe reflection upon his master, and revenged the affront by striking the confessor upon the breast with such violence, that the whole company concluded he could not survive the blow: he nevertheless received it with great tranquillity. The Priest was then set at liberty, and these myrmidons of oppression directed their rage entirely against Sabas, whom Atharides ordered to be promptly despatched on account of his obstinacy, and the great liberties he had taken with him. He was carried to Mussow, a river in Wallachia, to be drowned. Sabas, missing Sansala, whom he wished to have been a partaker with him in his sufferings, and in the glory that was to attend them, asked those about him what had become of him, and what he had done that he was to be deprived of the crown of martyrdom. They unceremoniously informed him, that that was no busi-

ness of his; and Sabas then employed the rest of his time in praising God for the favour done to him by the acceptance of his sufferings and life: in fine, his behaviour was such as to reduce his executioners to pity and respect him. They were even convinced of his utter innocency with regard to anything worthy of death. When they were come to the banks of the river, and were on the point of consigning him to the flood, he overheard the discourse among themselves on the subject, and, full of an ardent desire of martyrdom, he pressed them to the punctual execution of their commission. He was then thrown into the river, where he perished, having manifested a remarkable instance of courage and fidelity. His body was afterwards found, which received decent sepulture from the Christians of the place.

About this period the Goths were very powerful in the East; and the greater part being slaves to idolatry and superstition, the Christians often experienced the effects of the aversion which this people showed towards the faith of Christ and its professors. Nicetas was of Gothic race, born near the banks of the Danube, and had been converted to Christianity during the reign of Constantine, by Theophilus, Bishop of the Scythians, Sarmatians, and the Goths; and although the faithful had been frequently called to suffer for the sake of Christ, we do not find that Nicetas met with any trouble on account of his religion until the time of the Emperor Valens; when Athanaric, a potentate remarkable for his savage temper and implacable aversion to the Roman empire, imagining that Christianity was peculiar to that kingdom, viewed the professors of that faith as the indomitable adversaries of his crown. These prejudices were the fruitful source of a severe persecution throughout the length and breadth of his dominions. Wherever any Christians resided, Athanaric ordered an idol to be paraded about in a chariot, and exacted a prompt and servile adoration from all the faithful; who, upon refusing compliance with this outrageous mandate, were doomed to be burnt in their houses. Numbers of every age and of both sexes fled to the places of divine worship, where they anticipated security; but the Pagans had no regard for anything which the Christians might call sacred: they set on fire the buildings, and consumed all that were in them. Although it is probable that a "noble army of martyrs" suffered on this occasion, history has only transmitted to us the names of Sabas and Nicetas; of the latter of whom we have no very particular account, the Greek Martyrologies briefly recording, that he suffered September 15th, A.D. 372, being burnt alive for the faith as it is in Christ Jesus. In the multitude of martyrs who glorified God among the barbarous Goths, Nicetas holds a distinguished rank.*

The career of Valens was advancing to a crisis. It was followed by the first permanent establishment of the barbarians within the frontiers of the Roman empire. Christianity now began to assume a new and important function, promoting that assimilation and union between the conquerors and the conquered, which prevented the total extinction of the Roman civilization, and the oppression of Europe by

* Butler, Lives of the Saints, Sept. 15th, vol. ii., p. 445.

complete and almost hopeless barbarism. However Christianity might have disturbed the peace, and therefore, in some degree, the stability, of the empire by the religious factions which distracted the principal cities;—however that foreign principle of celibacy, which had now become completely identified with it, by withdrawing so many active and powerful minds into the cloister or the hermitage, may have diminished the civil energies, and even have impaired the military forces, of the country;* yet the enterprising and victorious religion amply repaid those injuries by its influence in re-modelling the new state of society. If treacherous to the interests of Rome, it was true to those of mankind. Throughout the whole process of the re-settling of Europe, and the other provinces of the kingdom, by the migratory tribes from the North and East, and the vast system of colonization and conquest which introduced one or more new races into every province, Christianity was the one common bond, the harmonizing principle, which subdued to something like unity the adverse and conflicting elements of society. Christianity, no doubt, while it discharged this lofty mission, could not but undergo a great and desecrating change. It might repress, but could not altogether subdue, the advance of barbarism: it was constrained to accommodate itself to the spirit of the times; while struggling to counteract barbarism, itself became barbarized. It lost at once much of its purity and its gentleness; it became splendid and imaginative, warlike and at length chivalrous. When a country in a comparatively high state of civilization is overrun by a foreign and martial horde, in numbers too great to be absorbed by the local population, the victors usually establish themselves as a kind of armed aristocracy, while the conquered are depressed into a race of slaves. Where there is no connecting, no intermediate, power, the two races co-exist in stern and irreconcilable hostility. The conquerors began to assume the supreme power, and to take possession of the property in the subjugated lands, or at least a considerable share in the landed estates; and laid the ground-work, as it were, for that feudal system which was afterwards developed, with more or less completeness, in different countries of Europe.

One thing alone, in some cases, observes Mr. Milman, tempered, during the process of conquest, the irreclaimable hostility; in all, after the final settlement, moulded up together in some degree the adverse powers. When, as in the Gothic invasion, it had made some previous impression on the invading race, Christianity was constantly present, silently mitigating the horrors of war, and afterwards blending together, at least to a certain extent, the rival races. At all times it became the connecting link, the intermediate power, which gave some community of interests, some similarity of feeling, to the master and the slave. They worshipped at least the same God in the same church; and the care of the same Clergy embraced both with

* Valens, perceiving the actual operation of this unwarlike dedication of so many able-bodied men to useless inactivity, attempted to correct the evil by law, and by the strong interference of the government. He invaded the monasteries and solitary hermitages of Egypt, and swept the Monks by thousands into the ranks of the army. But a reluctant Egyptian Monk would, in general, make but an indifferent soldier. (Milman.)

something of an harmonizing and equalizing superintendence. The Christian Clergy occupied a singular position in this new state of society. At the earlier period they were, in general, Roman: later, though sometimes barbarian by birth, they were Roman in education. When the prostration of the conquered people was complete, there was still an order of people not strictly belonging to either race, which maintained a commanding attitude, and possessed certain authority. The Christian Bishop confronted the barbarian Sovereign, or took his rank among the leading nobles. During the invasion, the Christian Clergy, though their possessions were ravaged in the indiscriminate warfare, though their persons were not always secure from insult or from slavery, yet, on the whole, retained, or very soon resumed, a certain sanctity, and hastened, before long, to wind their chains around the minds of the conquerors. Before a new invasion, Christianity had, in general, mingled up the invaders with the invaded; till at length Europe, instead of being a number of disconnected kingdoms, hostile in race, in civil polity, in religion, was united in a kind of federal Christian republic, or a principle of unity, acknowledging the supremacy of the Pope.*

The memorable interview of the Emperor with Basil, as it has been related by the orthodox party, displays, if the weakness, certainly the patience and forbearance, of the Sovereign; if the uncompromising firmness of the Prelate, some of that leaven of pride with which he has been taunted by Jerome. During his circuit through the Asiatic provinces, the Emperor approached the city of Cæsarea in Cappadocia. Modestus, the violent and unscrupulous favourite of Valens, was sent before to persuade the Bishop to submit to the religion of the Emperor. Basil was inflexible. "Know you not," said the offended officer, "that I have power to strip you of all your possessions, to banish you, to deprive you of life?" "He," answered Basil, "who possesses nothing, can lose nothing: all that you can take from me are the wretched garments I wear, and the few books which are my only wealth. As to exile, the earth is the Lord's; everywhere it will be my country, or rather my place of pilgrimage. Death will be a mercy, it will but admit me into life: long have I been dead to this world." Modestus expressed his surprise at this unusual tone of intrepid address. "You have never, then," replied the Prelate, "conversed before with a Bishop?" Modestus returned to his master. "Violence will be the only course with this man, who is neither to be appalled by menaces, nor won by blandishments." But the Emperor shrunk from violent measures. His humbler supplication confined itself to the admission of Arians into the communion of Basil; but he implored in vain. The Emperor mingled with the crowd of undistinguished worshippers; but he was so impressed by the solemnity of the service, the deep and full chanting of the Psalms, the silent adoration of the people, the order and the majesty,—by the calm dignity of the Bishop and of his attendant Clergy, which appeared more like the serenity of angels than the busy scene of mortal men,—that, awe-struck and overpowered, he

* Milman, History of Christianity, vol. iii., p. 130.

scarcely ventured to approach to make his offering. The Clergy stood irresolute whether they were to receive it from the infectious hand of an Arian: Basil at length, while the trembling Emperor leaned for support on an attendant Priest, condescended to advance, and accept the oblation. But neither supplications, nor bribes, nor threats, could induce the Bishop to admit the Sovereign to the communion. In a personal interview, instead of convincing the Bishop, Valens was so overpowered by the eloquence of Basil, as to bestow an endowment on the church for the use of the poor. A scene of mingled intrigue and asserted miracle ensued. The exile of Basil was determined; but the mind of Valens was alarmed by the dangerous illness of his son. The prayers of Basil were said to have restored the youth to life; but, a short time after, having been baptized by Arian hands, he relapsed and died. Basil, however, maintained his place and dignity to the end.*

The piety of Terentius, an officer of Valens, deserves to be recorded.† He was eminent for valour, and was able, on his return from Armenia, to erect trophies of victory. The Emperor promised to give him anything that he should desire. But he asked neither for gold nor silver, for lands, houses, nor power; but only that a church might be given to those who preached the apostolical doctrines. When Valens received the petition, and had read the contents, he was exceedingly irritated, and desired Terentius to prefer something else. He gathered up the torn and scattered fragments of the document, and left the presence of the Emperor, rejoicing that he had been thought worthy of suffering reproach and shame for the sake of the Saviour of men.

Numbers of the faithful were murdered among the Goths through the cruelty of their King, Athanaric. Eusebius of Samosata was among the sufferers. He sustains a prominent place on the page of ecclesiastical history, having proved himself to be one of the strongest pillars of the orthodox faith against the Arians. He was a native of Samosata in Syria, on the banks of the Euphrates, of which city he was constituted Bishop during the time of Constantius. The Persian war brought that Emperor to Antioch, where he assembled a Council with the design of condemning the terms "consubstantial," and "different in substance," and thus to preserve some medium between the orthodox and the pure Arians. The Bishops who met on that occasion, among whom was Eusebius, made it their first petition, that that church should be provided with a Pastor, whom they might consult in affairs relating to the points which were now in dispute; for Eustathius had been deposed by the Arian party, and Eudoxius, whom they had placed in his room, was removed to Constantinople, and thus Antioch was entirely destitute of a Prelate. Until now, the choice fell on Meletius by general agreement; and the writing which contained the free consent of both parties for his election, having been

* Greg. Nazian., Orat. xx.; Greg. Nyss., Contra Eunom.; and also the ecclesiastical historians *in loco.*; Milman, Hist. of Christianity, book iii., chap. 7, vol. iii., p. 127.

† Theodoret., Hist. Eccles., lib. iv., cap. 32.

subscribed by all the Bishops, was lodged in the hands of Eusebius. The first discourse the new Prelate delivered, opened the eyes of the Arians to see that they were mistaken in their man ; upon which they prevailed with the Emperor to banish him, after he had been about a month in possession of his see. Eusebius, perceiving the violence and irregularity of these proceedings, imagined that he had no further business at Antioch, and made the best of his way home. The Arians, remembering that he was in possession of the acts of the election of Meletius, and not judging their honour safe while it remained in his hands, they persuaded the Emperor to despatch a messenger after Eusebius to wrest this obnoxious document from him. The answer of the Prelate of Samosata was, that he could not give up a trust reposed in him by a large number, without the express consent of all concerned therein. Valens, irritated by this reply, wrote to Eusebius on the subject, and assured him that he had commissioned the bearer of his letter to cut off his right hand, if he refused to surrender the instrument in question ; which threat, historians inform us, was only used to compel Eusebius to comply with their request. He was fully aware that the party was capable of any cruelty to advance their cause ; but, without the least emotion, he presented both his hands, and declared that he would rather lose them, than part with so flagrant a proof of Arian injustice. The Emperor was surprised at his resolution, and professed highly to esteem him ever after. From this period Eusebius became exceedingly offensive to the Arians, who viewed him as their inveterate foe. When Jovian succeeded Julian, he restored peace to the church, and gave Meletius the liberty of convening a Council at Antioch. Eusebius with twenty-five other Prelates composed that assembly, who were all unanimous in declaring for the doctrine of the church as delivered by the Council of Nice. The church suffered greatly at this time by the Arians, supported as they were by the authority of Valens, who was blindly devoted to that party. Their industry and activity obliged the orthodox Prelates to be upon their guard, none of whom was more vigilant than Eusebius. His zeal, however, was so governed by the rules of prudence, that his attempts seldom failed of success. It was not enough for Eusebius to screen his own flock from the insults of the common enemy, and maintain the faith in its purity against all the stratagems of those who would corrupt the people ; but, knowing that churches were by the iniquity of the times deprived of their Pastors, he disguised himself, and made the tour of Syria, Phœnicia, and Palestine ; fortified the orthodox against the solicitations of the heretics, ordained several Priests and inferior Clergy, and when he discovered orthodox Prelates in his travels, he assisted them in consecrating Bishops for the service of the widowed churches. It was impossible to conceal the hand that every day gave some additional blow to the Arian party, and depressed their interests wherever they were employed, until the Emperor, at their instigation, granted an order for Eusebius to be banished into Thrace. He was at Samosata when the messenger arrived with this order : it was late in the evening ; and the Bishop, who was well beloved by his people,

requested that he would make no noise, but as much as possible conceal his business; "for," said he, "if it become public, the people will fall upon you, throw you into the river, and then I shall be accused of causing your death." Eusebius was sufficiently collected to go through his accustomed devotions; and when the evening was far advanced, he left his house on foot, attended only by one trusty servant, who carried a pillow and a book after him. At break of day the whole town was in an uproar; for the Bishop's servant, who accompanied him in his exile, had left his master's orders for such as were to follow him, and the books which were to be sent after him: but there was no room for consolation while the Bishop was absent, and the river was soon covered with boats, manned with individuals who were in quest of their father and friend. He had not left Zeugma when they reached that town, and they conjured him with tears and sighs not to abandon them, and thus leave the flock exposed to the fury of the wolf. The Prelate could not but be strongly affected with the remonstrances of his people; but urged the authority of the Apostle Paul, for submitting to the commands of the powers in existence. Finding they could not prevail upon him to return to Samosata, they entreated to be allowed to testify their affection for him by furnishing him with all that could make that long and arduous journey as tolerable as possible. They offered him money, clothes, and servants, and every accommodation in their power: he thanked them for these tokens of regard, accepted a few of them, prayed with the company, exhorted them to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints," and then pursued his journey into Thrace. Gregory Nazianzen could not enjoy the satisfaction of beholding the exile as he passed through Cappadocia, inasmuch as he was confined to his room on account of indisposition. But as soon as he was able to write, he gave him to know how much he was grieved at being deprived of that pleasure. In this communication he informs him, that, seeing him assert the faith with such undaunted courage, and submit to all the hardships which attended his generous behaviour with so much patience and humility, he viewed him as an illustrious martyr of Jesus Christ, and that he ought to receive the assistance of the prayers of the faithful.

When Eusebius arrived at his journey's end, he wrote to Basil, and sent the letter by a person who was well acquainted with the country, and capable of giving an exact account of his situation in that district. Basil, overjoyed to hear from Eusebius, embraced the opportunity of one of his flock journeying to Thrace, to acquaint him with his sentiments with regard to the courage and fidelity displayed by Eusebius, and the glory that attended his suffering in such a cause. The correspondence was carried on between these Prelates during the exile. In the meantime the see of Samosata was filled by Eunomius: not the individual against whom Basil and Gregory Nyssen wrote; but a man of a sweet and easy temper, and evidently utterly unfit for supporting such a usurpation. The conduct of the people on his accession to the episcopate was an undeniable proof of the uncommon merit of Eusebius, and also of his pastoral qualifications. They

were so unanimous in their affections towards their banished Prelate, that not one of them, no matter of whatever rank, would communicate with the intruder, or even attend at the public services when he undertook to officiate: they carried their resentment at his intrusion so high, that they would not speak to him, nor exchange any of the offices of civil life with him. Eunomius could not but discover how disagreeable he was to the people of Samosata, and therefore thought it advisable to leave them. The Arians were soon convinced of their mistake in placing one of so much moderation at the head of the church in that city, and chose one of a very different character to supersede him. The second usurper was named Lucius, notorious for his roughness, and serving the heretical cause with as much warmth and passion as could be desired by those who promoted him to that office. Lucius soon discovered that he was as odious to the people as the opinions which he held, and was endeavouring to establish among them. Nothing, however, appeared to discourage him. The behaviour of the Clergy and people only provoked him to still more violent measures. In the transports of his rage, he banished several Ecclesiastics: among the rest was Evolcius, a Deacon, and Antiochus, a Priest, nephew to Eusebius, the former of whom was exiled to the desert of Oasis beyond Egypt, and the latter to a remote corner of Armenia. Basil could not endure that his friends Eusebius and Meletius of Antioch should be misrepresented by those who had espoused the interests of Paulinus, and imposed on the Western Bishops as persons who were suspected of Arianism: he wrote a letter in their defence to Peter of Alexandria, then at Rome, urging their sufferings inflicted by that party as a proof of the purity of their faith; and also solemnly assured him, on his own experience, that they were perfectly orthodox in their sentiments and discourses; and, in a letter addressed to Eusebius, he made very strong complaints against the Prelates of the West, who were so easily prejudiced against one for whose faith he could so safely answer. Thrace was now become a scene of war between the Goths and the Emperor's forces, which considerably increased the pain and mortification attendant on the banishment of Eusebius. During these contests his life was frequently in peril; but the divine protection was visibly exercised in his favour, and he was preserved for greater usefulness in the church. In the year 378 Valens left Antioch, and made his head-quarters at Constantinople, and, after some stay there, he resolved to march against the Goths in person; but before he entered upon that expedition, he endeavoured to secure the protection of Heaven by granting peace to the church, and allowing the exiled Bishops to return to their respective sees. Eusebius, thus restored to his post, began to consider the distressed condition of the faithful in Mesopotamia and Syria, who were deprived of their Pastors. Historians inform us, he provided them with Bishops. The last place to which he extended his care in this manner was Dolica, a small town in Syria, overrun with Arianism: his design was to put that diocess in the care of Maris, who was every way qualified for that important post. As he was entering the town with this object, an Arian woman, who was but

too well acquainted with his design, threw a tile from the top of the house, which broke his head, and of this wound he died in a few days. Eusebius, whose great ambition was to imitate the conduct of his divine Master, foreseeing his death would bring that unfortunate woman into trouble, gave his friends who were with him an oath that they would not prosecute her. He died, A.D. 380.

Christianity had early, as it were, prepared the way for the amalgamation of the Goths with the Roman empire. In their first inroads, during the reign of Gallienus, when they ravaged a large part of the Roman territory, they carried away numbers of slaves, especially from Asia Minor and Cappadocia. Among these were many Christians. The slaves subdued the conquerors: the gentle doctrines of Christianity made their way to the hearts of all the barbarous warriors. A Gothic Bishop,* with a Greek name, Theophilus, attended at the Council of Nice. Ulphilas, at the time of the invasion in the reign of Valens, consecrated Bishop of the Goths during an embassy to Constantinople, was of Cappadocian descent.† Among the Goths, Christianity first assumed its new office, the advancement of general civilization, as well as of purer religion. It is difficult to suppose that the art of writing was altogether unknown to the Goths before the time of Ulphilas. The language seems to have attained a high degree of artificial perfection before it was employed by that Prelate in the translation of the Scriptures.‡ Still, the Mæso-Gothic alphabet, of which the Greek is by far the principal element, was generally adopted by the Goths.§ It was universally disseminated; it was perpetuated, until the extinction or absorption of the Gothic race in other tribes, by the translation of the sacred writings. This was the work of Ulphilas, who, in his version of the Scriptures,‖ is reported to have omitted, with a Christian but vain precaution, the Books of Kings, lest, being too congenial to the spirit of his countrymen, they should inflame their warlike enthusiasm. Whether the genuine mildness of Christianity, or some patriotic reverence for the Roman empire, from which he drew his descent, influenced the pious Bishop, the martial ardour of the Goths was not the less fatal to the stability of the Roman empire. Christianity did not

* Philostorg., Hist. Eccles., lib. ii., cap. 5.

† Socrat., Hist. Eccles., lib. ii., cap. 41.

‡ The Gothic of Ulphilas is the link between the East and Europe, the transition-state from the Sanscrit to the modern Teutonic languages. It is possible that the Goths, after their migration from the East to the North of Germany, may have lost the art of writing, partly from the want of materials. The German forests would afford no substitute for the palm-leaves of the East: they may have been reduced to the barbarous *runes* of the other heathen tribes. (Milman.)

§ The Mæso-Gothic alphabet has twenty-five letters, of which fifteen are evidently Greek, eight Latin. The two, *th* and *hw*, to which the Greek and Latin have no corresponding sound, are derived from some other quarter. They are most likely ancient characters. The *th* resembles closely the runic letter which expresses the same sound. (Milman.)

‖ The greater part of the fragments of Ulphilas's version of the Scriptures now extant is contained in the celebrated Codex Argenteus, now at Upsala. This splendid MS., written in silver letters, on parchment of a purple ground, contains almost the whole four Gospels. On the Gothic translation of the Scriptures, see Socrat., Eccles. Hist., lib. iv., cap. 33; Sozomen., Eccles. Hist., lib. vi., cap. 37; Philost., Hist. Eccles., lib. ii., cap. 5; Theod., Hist. Eccles., lib. v., cap. 30, 31.

even mitigate the violence of the shock with which, for the first time, a whole host of northern barbarians was thrown upon the empire, never again to be shaken off. This Gothic invasion, which first established a Teutonic nation within the frontier of the empire, was conducted with all the ferocity, provoked, indeed, on the part of the Romans by the basest treachery, of hostile races, with no bond of connexion. Mr. Milman judiciously observes, that the pacificatory effect of the general conversion of the Goths to Christianity, was impeded by the form of faith which they embraced. The Gothic Prelates, Ulphilas * among the rest, who visited the court of Constantinople, found the Arian Bishops in possession of the chief authority: they were the recognised Prelates of the empire. Whether their less cultivated minds were unable to comprehend, or their language to express, the fine and subtle distinctions of the Trinitarian faith, or persuaded, as it was said, by the Arian Bishops, that it was mere verbal dispute, these doctrines were introduced among the Goths before their passage of the Danube, or their settlement within the empire. The whole nation received this form of Christianity: from them it appears to have spread, first embracing the other branch of the nation, the Ostrogoths, among the Gepidæ, the Vandals, and the Burgundians. Among the barbaric conquerors was the stronghold of Arianism: while it was gradually repudiated by the Romans, both in the East and in the West, it raised its head, and obtained a superiority, which it had never before attained, in Italy and Spain. Whether more congenial to the simplicity of the barbaric mind, or in some respects cherished on one side by the conqueror as a proud distinction, more cordially detested by the Roman population, as the creed of their barbarous masters, Arianism appeared almost to make common cause with the Teutonic invaders, and only fell with the Gothic monarchies in Italy and Spain. While Gratian and Valentinian the Second espoused the cause of Trinitarianism in the West, by measures which show that their sacerdotal advisers were men of greater energy and decision than their civil ministers, it subsisted

* Ulphilas, a Gothic Bishop, to whom a Gothic translation of the New Testament has been ascribed, was a Cappadocian; but the period at which he lived is not ascertained. Philostorgius places him in 326, under Constantine the Great. When the Goths were expelled by the Huns, in 375, he was sent to the Emperor Valens, to solicit a place of settlement for them in Thrace; and, in order to obtain it, he is said to have embraced Arianism. It is stated that he invented the Gothic characters, and translated the Bible into that language. The Swedes flatter themselves with the idea, that they possess a part of this ancient monument, containing the greater part of the four Gospels, in the so-called Codex Argenteus. This Codex is mutilated in several places; but what remains entire, is, for the most part, perfectly legible. It was first discovered in 1597, in the library of the Benedictine abbey of Werden, in Westphalia, by Anthony Marillon. Soon after, it was observed in the same library by Arnold Mercator, who transcribed a few verses, which Grüter gave to the public in his "Inscriptiones Antiquæ." From the abbey of Werden it was conveyed to Prague, during the short period in which that town was occupied by Frederick, Elector-Palatine. At the capture of Prague, in 1648, it was found among the literary spoils by Count Königsmark, and sent as a present to Queen Christina, who, it is said, gave it to Isaac Vossius, on whose death it was purchased by Count Magnus Gabriel de la Gardie, and presented to the University of Upsal. Of this Codex there have been three editions, the first printed at Dort, in 1665; the second at Stockholm, in 1672; and the third at Oxford, in 1750. The last contains a Gothic Grammar, by the Editor, Edward Lye.

almost as a foreign and barbarous form of Christianity.* The measures which Valens took for the suppression of the Goths, left him but little leisure to vex the church: he therefore endeavoured to soothe the asperities which he had already created, and obliged the Arian Bishop of Alexandria to vacate his throne for Peter, the nominee of Athanasius. Valentinian died in the year 375, and Valens fell in battle, 378.

The empire was now divided between Gratian, the eldest son of Valentinian, his brother Valentinian, who ruled in the West, and Theodosius, whom he chose as his colleague, in the East.† The first and last of these Princes were devoutly attached to the orthodox tenets; and under their reign the church recovered from the confusion into which it had been thrown by the systematic opposition of Valens. Gratian put himself, with filial reverence, under the instruction of Ambrose, who wrote his treatise on the divinity of the Holy Ghost expressly at his request. But this pious Sovereign was murdered in his attempt to subdue the rebellion of Maximus, in 383; and for some time Justina, the mother of young Valentinian, again wasted the strength of the church by her attempts to restore the Arian ascendancy. In this she was firmly opposed by Ambrose, whom she in vain sought to expel from his bishopric. Fearless of the consequences, he intrepidly declared, when his church was surrounded by imperial troops, that he would never willingly leave the flock of Christ to be devoured by wolves. But Justina was resolved upon executing her purpose; and trusting that, by adding the aid of a keen sophist to the authority of her station, success would be made certain, she invited the Arian Auxentius, a Scythian by birth, to challenge him to dispute before the Emperor on the subject in question. Ambrose replied, with dignity, that the Emperor was not to be constituted a Judge in such matters; and Justina was left to depend solely on the illegal exercise of authority. Again demanding the resignation of the churches in Milan, and again meeting with a refusal, the basilica, or cathedral, in which Ambrose had enclosed himself, was once more surrounded by the military. But he continued firm to his purpose; while the people, devoted to their Prelate, gave daily proofs of their attachment, by exposing themselves to imprisonment, and every other species of oppression, rather than assent to the Arian dogmas. The united popularity and fortitude of the Bishop rendered his forcible deposition too perilous an experiment for even Justina to make; and his influence being required to stop the threatened invasion of Maximus, he was finally left in the peaceable enjoyment of his authority. The youthful Valentinian himself, made acquainted with the true merits of the Prelate by his colleague Theodosius, only lived long enough to win his regards, and obtain, in dying, a valuable testimony of his pious affection.‡

We now arrive at a critical period in the history of the church, with regard to the records of persecution. A period of fifty-six years had

* Milman, History of Christianity, vol. iii., p. 139.
† Theodoret., Hist. Eccles., lib. v., cap. 1.
‡ Stebbing, History of the Christian Church, vol. i., p. 184.

elapsed between the Council of Nice, and the second General Council held at Constantinople, the empire in the mean time having fallen under the dominion of Constantine II., Constantius II., Constans, Julian the Apostate, Jovian, Valentinian, Valens, Gratian, Valentinian II., and Theodosius; all of whom, whether orthodox in their faith or otherwise, may be said to have pursued the policy of Constantine, in enforcing the observance of the canons of the church by the civil law. In the East a new metropolitan city had been built by Constantine, and named after him, Constantinople, which was made the seat of empire. The jurisdiction of the see of Constantinople was rapidly extended in Europe and Asia, and its Bishops were acknowledged second in precedence; the Primate of Rome, from that city having been the ancient imperial residence, being honoured as "head of the church." At this time the incomes of churches were committed to the management of Deacons and Sub-Deacons; but all distributions of these revenues were dispensed at the discretion of each Bishop, for the maintenance of the Clergy of his diocess, and for alms. Many circumstances, also, contributed during this age to the diffusion of the Gospel, which had spread eastward into Persia * and India, and westward into Iberia; also, according to some, it had found its way into Britain and Ireland; and when it is considered that the first Christian Emperor was proclaimed in Britain, it is fair to presume that he would desire to propagate his own religion in this part of the empire.

A sect, whose history belongs rather to this than the ensuing period, originated from the peculiar opinions of Priscillian, a Spanish Bishop, whose character is given by Sulpitius, with his usual spirit and brilliancy of style. He is said to have been a man of great learning and eloquence, endowed with vast powers of body and mind; who, by assumed modesty and gravity, was calculated to gain ascendancy over ordinary capacities. Idacius, an aged Presbyter, in conjunction with Ithacius, Bishop of Sossuba, (a doubtful locality,) accused him, before a Council of Saragossa, in 380, with being a teacher of Manichean doctrines, and obtained his condemnation; but the death of Gratian prevented the rescript for his banishment being put in force, and he was again restored to his see for a short time. His accusers then urged the civil power, that the heresiarch might be expelled

* In the year 343, according to Baronius, but more correctly, 349, Sapor, King of Persia, sent ambassadors to Constantine the Great, to negotiate a treaty of alliance; when Constantine took occasion to write to that King, entreating him to grant protection to the Christians in his dominions. Nevertheless, the Magi raised a persecution against them, by accusing Simeon, Archbishop of Seleucia, with favouring the Romans, who were then at war with Persia; whereupon Sapor burdened them with insupportable taxes, and ordered their Priests and Ministers to be beheaded, their churches to be demolished, and their property confiscated. He ordered Simeon, also, to be taken into custody, as a traitor to the state and the religion of the Persians. These orders were executed, and Simeon was brought before the King in irons. He was commanded to worship the sun, which he refused, and was condemned to death, with many other Christians. An edict was published in the following year, by which all the Christians in Persia were condemned to death; and great numbers perished, together with all the Bishops and heads of churches; and the persecution was continued by his successors, with more or less severity, till the year 399. (Sozomen., Hist. Eccles., lib. ii., cap. 8—15; Socrat., Hist. Eccles., lib. vii., cap. 8.)

from the cities of Spain, which had generally become infected with his errors; and the Magistrates issued their decrees accordingly. Upon this, the Priscillianists sought protection in Italy, and prayed to be heard in their own defence before Damasus, Bishop of Rome; they appealed, also, to Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, for the same privilege; and in both these cases their suit was rejected. Maximus, the usurper, at the death of Gratian, entered Treves at the head of his forces; and Ithacius immediately sought to obtain his decree against the heretics. Priscillian also appealed to the same authority, and Maximus took upon himself the office of Judge in the case. The heretics were accused of spreading opinions opposed to Christianity; and they were declared guilty, and condemned by the Emperor. Martin, Bishop of Tours, interposed, and implored Maximus to spare the lives of the victims. He reminded Maximus, that since they stood expelled from the churches by the sentence of ecclesiastical Councils, it was a new and unknown evil for a secular Judge to undertake to decide cases purely spiritual. This interference in behalf of the lives of the condemned party was ineffectual, and Priscillian, with several of his deluded adherents, suffered death at Treves, in the year 384. It has not been satisfactorily shown what the precise opinions of this sect were; but, not consuming the eucharist, omission of fasts, the enjoining of celibacy, and making perjury, in times of persecution, a pardonable crime, are stated to have been errors of which they were guilty. Whatever may have been his offence, Priscillian is deemed the first martyr to sectarian opinions, under the operation of the system which resulted from the measures of Constantine.* When Valens died, Gratian appointed an experienced and judicious person to take part with himself in the government of the Eastern world. Theodosius, a Spaniard, who had given abundant proof of valour and prudence, was fixed upon, and the choice was generally approved. He was forty-three years of age when he was called to Sirmium, and invested with the purple in the year 379. The first two years of his reign having been chiefly occupied in clearing Thrace, and other parts of the realm, from the Gothic invaders, by whom they were overrun, the first great act in which he made himself conspicuous in the cause of the church was, the calling of the Council of Constantinople in 381. There is, however, one incident which, as it occurred about this period, served to unfold the character of the emperor, and to presage the glory of his reign. Towards the end of the first year 380, Theodosius received the sacrament of baptism from Ascolus, the orthodox Bishop of Thessalonica; and as he ascended from the font, he dictated a solemn edict, which proclaimed his own faith, and prescribed the religion of his subjects. "It is our pleasure," such is the imperial style, "that all the nations which are governed by our clemency and moderation, should steadfastly adhere to the religion which was taught by the Apostle Peter to the Romans; and which is now professed by the Pontiff Damasus, and by Peter, Bishop of Alexandria, a man of apostolic holiness. According to the discipline of the Apostles, and the doctrine of the Gospel, let us believe the sole

* Townsend, Eccles. and Civil Hist., vol. i., p. 350.

Deity of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, under an equal majesty and sacred Trinity. We authorize the followers of this doctrine to assume the title of Catholic Christians; and as we judge that all others are extravagant madmen, we brand them with the infamous name of heretics, and declare that their conventicles shall no longer usurp the respectable appellation of churches. Besides the condemnation of divine justice, they must expect to suffer the severe penalties which our authority, guided by heavenly wisdom, shall think proper to inflict upon them." * The power over the church, above that of Bishops and Metropolitans, was vested in Councils, and in the Emperors. The latter, as heads of the state, were acknowledged as heads of the church also; and as such, they convoked Synods at their pleasure, and confirmed their laws; they, moreover, ordered punishments, and appointed to dignities. Influenced, as it might happen, by secular or religious motives, they sometimes took upon themselves to decide controversies, and even to rescind decisions of Synods, by declaring in favour of those who had been condemned. The party favoured by such interference was not likely to complain: those only who suffered maintained the authority of the Bishops over the church, and denied that of the Emperors. Though dependence of this kind on the civil authority was generally objected to by the Clergy, they still acknowledged the decision of the Emperor to be the final appeal; and it was a boast of the Bishop of Rome, that he could be judged by none other than the Emperor himself. The Bishops were submissive to the imperial authority, when exercised in the affairs of the church, so long as the rights of conscience and the doctrines of Christianity were not infringed. Indeed, the historian Socrates, in the preface to his fifth book, says, "That from the time Emperors embraced the Christian religion, the administration of the church devolved upon them." Still, on the other hand, it is necessary to be borne in mind, that the care of public morals had always been confided exclusively to the Clergy, which gave them power over the Emperors themselves. A remarkable instance, which occurred near the time now under review, may be mentioned in proof of this authority of the spiritual over the temporal power. Soon after the advancement of Theodosius the Great to the imperial throne, he was called to account by Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, for having caused many inhabitants of Thessalonica to be massacred, in revenge for the murder of some imperial officers which had been committed in that place; and was compelled to reconcile himself with the church by the humiliation of public penance.† The account is very graphically given by Theodoret:—

After the death of Eugenius, the Emperor went to Milan, and repaired towards the church, to pray within its walls. When he drew near the gates of the edifice, he was met by Ambrose, the Bishop of the city, who took hold of him by his purple robe, and said to him, in the presence of the multitude, "Stand back! a man defiled by sin, and with hands imbrued in blood unjustly shed, is not worthy, with-

* Townsend, Eccles. and Civil Hist., vol. i., p. 354.
† Tillemont, Hist. des Emp., tom. v., p. 336.

out repentance, to enter within these sacred precincts, or partake of the holy mysteries." The Emperor, struck with admiration at the boldness of the Bishop, began to reflect on his own conduct, and, with much contrition, retraced his steps. The crime alluded to had been committed under the following circumstances:—A charioteer had made a declaration of obscene passion to Buthericus, a military chief of Illyria, and had, in consequence, been committed to prison. Some time after, some magnificent races were to be held at the hippodrome, and the populace of Thessalonica demanded the release of the prisoner, considering him necessary to the celebration of the games. As their request was not attended to, they rose up in sedition, and slew Buthericus. On hearing of this deed, the wrath of the Emperor was excited to a fearful height, and he commanded that a certain number of the citizens should be put to death. The whole city was deluged with blood unrighteously spilled; for strangers, who had but just arrived there on their journey to other lands, were sacrificed with others. There were many cases of suffering well worthy of commiseration, of which the following is an instance:—A merchant offered himself to be slain as a substitute for his two sons, who had both been selected as victims, and promised the soldiers to give them all the gold he possessed, on condition of their effecting the exchange. They could not but compassionate his misfortune, and consented to take him as a substitute for one of his sons, but declared that they did not dare to let off both the young men, as that would render the appointed number of the slain incomplete. The father gazed on his sons, and wept bitterly; and, loving them both equally, he could not make choice between them: he was still standing irresolute, and utterly unable to decide, when they were both slain before his eyes. I have also been informed, said the historian Sozomen, that a faithful slave voluntarily offered to die instead of his master, who was being led to the place of execution. It appears that it was for these, and other acts of cruelty, that Ambrose rebuked the Emperor, forbade him to enter the church, and excommunicated him. Theodosius publicly confessed his sin in the sanctuary, and, during the time set apart for penance, refrained from wearing his imperial ornaments, as being inconsistent with a season of mourning. He also enacted a law, prohibiting the officers intrusted with the execution of the imperial mandates, from inflicting the punishment of death till thirty days after the mandate had been issued, in order that the wrath of the Emperor might have time to be appeased, and that room might be made for the exercise of mercy and repentance. Ambrose, no doubt, performed many other actions worthy of his priestly office, which are known only to the inhabitants of the country. Among the illustrious deeds that are attributed to him, we are made acquainted with the following:—It was the custom for the Emperor to take a seat in assemblies of the church within the palisades of the altar, so that he sat apart from the rest of the people. Ambrose, considering that this custom had originated either from subserviency, or from want of discipline, caused the Emperor to be seated without the trellis-work of the altar, so that he sat in front of the people, and behind the Priests. The Emperor Theodosius approved

of this wise alteration, as did likewise his successors; and we are told that it has been ever since scrupulously observed. Another magnanimous action was performed by this Prelate of Milan. A Pagan of distinction insulted Gratian, affirming that he was unworthy of his father; and he was, in consequence, condemned to death. As he was being led out to execution, Ambrose went to the palace to implore a pardon. Gratian was then engaged in witnessing a private exhibition of horse-racing; for it was frequently the practice of the Emperors to engage in these diversions at times that the public were excluded: the officers at the gates of the palace would not therefore interrupt him by informing him that Ambrose solicited an interview. On finding this to be the case, the Bishop went to the circus, and, entering with the persons who took charge of the animals, he made his way up to the Emperor, and would not leave him till he obtained a pardon for the man who had been condemned to death. Ambrose was very diligent in the observance of the canons of the church, and in maintaining discipline among his Clergy. I have selected the above two incidents from among the record of his numerous magnanimous deeds, in order to show with what intrepidity he addressed those in power, when the service of God was in question.*

The disputes of the belligerent parties on questions of a spiritual character, were generally embarrassed with perplexing and complicated theories; and the Emperors were in difficulty to know which opinions were orthodox, and which were heretical. Appeals to minor Synods became indispensable, in order to preserve entire the apostolical constitution of the church. These provincial assemblies were often held until the first Council of Constantinople was convened.

Epiphanius,† a popular writer of this period, and Bishop of

* Sozom., Hist. Eccles., lib. vii., cap. 25.

† Sozomen, who had a strong tendency to superstitious extravagance, and was very credulous, gives the following account of Epiphanius, and of a miracle which he performed:—Peter the Apostle was not, it appears, the only man who raised another from the dead: John the Evangelist wrought a similar miracle, it is said, at Ephesus, as did likewise the daughters of Philip at Hierapolis. The miracle of Epiphanius is said to be as follows:—Two beggars, having ascertained when Epiphanius would pass that way, agreed to exact a larger donation than usual from him, by having recourse to stratagem. As soon as the Bishop was seen approaching, one of the beggars flung himself on the ground, and simulated death; the other uttered loud lamentations, deploring the loss of his companion, and his own inability to procure him the rite of sepulture. Epiphanius prayed to God that the deceased might rest in peace: he gave the surviver sufficient money for the interment, and said to him, "Take measures, my son, for the burial of your companion, and weep no more; he cannot now arise from the dead; the calamity was inevitable; therefore you ought to bear it with resignation." Saying these words, the Bishop departed from the spot. As soon as there was no one in sight, the beggar who had addressed Epiphanius touched the other with his foot, as he lay extended on the ground, and said to him, "You have well performed your part: arise now, for through your labour we have a good provision for to-day." He, however, returned no answer to this address, and, as he appeared incapable of speech or motion, the other beggar ran after Epiphanius, wept, and tore his hair, confessed the deception that had been practised, and besought him to restore the dead man to life. Epiphanius merely exhorted him to submit with patience to the catastrophe, and sent him away. God did not raise the dead beggar to life; but (as Sozomen says) I feel persuaded it was His design to show that those who practise deception on his servants, are accounted as guilty of the fraud, as if it had been perpetrated against Him who sees all, and who hears all. (Sozom., Hist. Eccles., lib. vii., cap. 27.)

Salamis, in the Isle of Cyprus, was much inferior in ability to his numerous contemporaries. But his works, though deficient in just argument, and containing statements on which not much dependence should be placed, are nevertheless valuable, as exhibiting the general state of opinions and parties at the time when he wrote. The treatise on heresies is his principal production, and is divided into three parts. In the first he gives an account of the heresies which existed before Christ, amounting, according to his statement, to forty-six; in the next he describes twenty-three of a later date; and in the third book, eleven.* He was bred a Monk, and the work just mentioned is disfigured by so many marks of levity and ignorance, that no one can follow him with confidence.† Intimately connected with our history of the records of persecution, stands the first œcumenical Council of Constantinople. By the canons of Nice, and the apostolical code intimately associated therewith, we are in possession of the fundamental laws and regulations by which the universal church preserved its principles and rites free from corruption; and the enactments of the Constantinopolitan Synod complete the system of episcopal legislature unanimously ratified and acted upon by the fathers of the first four centuries. The former Synod, held in this city, took place in 360, or 362, in which sixty-two Bishops excommunicated and deposed Macedonius, Bishop of Constantinople, for his errors in faith concerning the Holy Spirit. The first question considered ‡ was that relating to the church of Constantinople; and it was declared, that Maximus, called the Cynic, had not been lawfully constituted a Prelate; that his ordination, and all that he had since done in his pretended character of Bishop, was null and void, and that he was a usurper of the see of Constantinople. Then they proceeded to elect to the see Gregory of Nazianzum, and eventually, notwithstanding his entreaties and tears, obliged him to accept the office. During these proceedings it pleased God to take away Meletius; and Gregory succeeded him as President of the Council. He endeavoured, with all his power, to induce them to leave Paulinus in the see of Antioch, with a view of appeasing the divisions of that church; but his efforts were ineffectual. The Bishops of Macedonia and of Egypt vehemently opposed his designs, objecting also to his election, upon the ground, that, being already Bishop of another see, he ought not to have been translated to that of Constantinople. In consequence of this, Gregory formed the resolution to entreat the Fathers to permit him to resign the see of Constantinople; which he in the end did, and Nectarius was elected in his room. During this interval Timothy, Bishop of Alexandria, presided over the Council; but Nectarius, immediately after his election, took that office upon himself. Now, Nectarius had been a Priest in the latter city;

* Stebbing, Hist. of the Christ. Church, vol. i., p. 217.

† Waddington, A History of the Church, vol. i., chap. vii., p. 217.

‡ Platina dates this Council 370. The proper date is from 381 to 383, it having been prorogued through that period. Dupin makes three assemblies of Bishops; one in 381, another in 382, and the last in 383. It began in May, 381, and sat till August. Cave and Newman think there were only two sittings. (Hey, Lect., vol. iv., p. 96; Newman, Arians, p. 398; Mosheim, vol. i., p. 355.)

but, so far from having passed through the inferior degrees, as the canons direct, he had not been even baptized.* The Council then proceeded to publish seven canons. 1. Confirms the Council of Nice, and anathematizes, "extremâ execratione ac detestatione," all who deny it. 2. Forbids Bishops to go beyond their borders, and to trouble other dioceses; directs that the Bishop of Alexandria shall have the sole administration of Egypt; that the affairs of the Asian, Pontic, and Thracian dioceses shall be administered by their respective Bishops, and that the Synod of each province shall administer the affairs pertaining thereto. 3. Gives the Bishops of Constantinople the post of honour next to the Bishops of Rome. 4. Declares the nullity of the consecration and of the episcopal acts of Maximus. 5. Approves the *tome* of the Western Bishops, and of Antioch; which is thought to be the synodical letter of Damasus, Bishop of Rome, to the Council of Antioch, A.D. 378, and the letter of the Fathers in answer. These acknowledge one and the same Divinity, in the three persons of the Trinity.† 6. Lays down a rule for ecclesiastical judgments, and permits all persons whatever to bring an accusation against a Bishop, or any other Ecclesiastic, on account of any private injury or wrong said to have been received; but in church matters it directs, that no accusation shall be received coming from heretics or schismatics, or from persons excommunicated or deposed, or accused of any crime, before they shall have justified themselves. And, 7. States the conditions upon which heretics may be received into the church, with the ceremony to be observed on the occasion. It ordains, that Arians, Macedonians, Sabbatians, (Novatians,) Quartodecimans, and Apollinarians, shall be received after they have made profession of faith, and anathematized their errors, by the unction of the Holy Spirit; and the chrism, wherewith they shall be anointed on the forehead, the eyes, the mouth, the hands, the ears, at the pronouncing of these words, "This is the seal of the Holy Spirit." As to the Eunomians, the Montanists, the Sabellians, and all other heretics, they were to be received like Pagans; that is, at first they shall receive the imposition of hands, to give them the name of Christians; afterwards they shall be placed in the rank of catechumens; that they shall be exorcised by blowing three times into their faces, and into their ears; (*exsufflation;*) that they shall be catechised; and that for a long time they shall be permitted to hear only the holy Scripture in the church; and at last they shall be baptized.

Notwithstanding many pacific appearances studded the hemisphere of the church, there was, nevertheless, an under current of deep malignant feeling secretly spreading the waters of strife, among the various communities of the faithful. Several of the Emperors, when they embraced the faith of Christ, took the most effectual and seasonable

* Landon, Manual of Councils, p. 163.

† The *tome* of the Western Bishops was the confirmation of the Nicene Creed, and anathematization of those who dissented from it, agreed upon at the Council of Sardica, where were met three hundred and forty-one Bishops, being all of the Western Church. (Howel, Synopsis Canonum, p. 23, folio, London, 1710; Dupin, vol. i., p. 273; Cave, vol. i., p. 366, and Beveridge; Cod. Canon, *in loc.*)

measures to discountenance the practice of idolatry, and to introduce the worship of the true God. Constantine the Great, and his son Constantius, who succeeded him in the East, forbade offering sacrifice to the deities of Paganism, but gave no directions for the destruction of the temples. Julian the Apostate, it will be remembered, reversed the decrees of his predecessors, and employed the weight of his authority in the re-establishment of idolatry and superstition. Jovian, his immediate successor, prohibited pagan worship, but did not survive to see the fruit of his exertions. Valens, to whose share the Eastern empire descended, was so wholly intent on the promotion of Arianism, that he only disturbed the faithful, and allowed the Heathens the unlimited exercise of their unhallowed faith. This was the melancholy posture of affairs in the East, when Theodosius the Great was associated in the empire with Gratian, A.D. 379. The new Emperor, full of zeal for the Christian name, was resolved to complete the good work, which had suffered so much interruption since the days of Constantine. As Egypt had always been considered the hot-bed of superstition, and the chief seat of idolatry, he commenced his reform with that country, and proceeded to Phœnicia and Syria. Theodosius sent an order to Cynegius, Prefect of the East, for shutting up all the temples, and prohibiting pagan superstition, under very severe penalties. The Prelates were also required to forward the execution of that order. Marcellus, the Bishop of Apamea in Syria, was the first who attempted to demolish the temples of the idols. This ecclesiastical dignitary was a man of great merit, and universally respected for many excellent qualities. He had laboured hard for the extirpation of idolatry in Apamea; but his success was not proportioned to his zeal, until Cynegius came, attended with an armed force, which kept the Heathens in awe, and deterred them from a revolt before his arrival, for which they were ripe. The design of the Prefect was to undermine the very foundations of idolatry in that city, by the destruction of the temple of Jupiter; a very magnificent and extended structure. He was, however, unequal to the task. The stones were of a stupendous size, very durable, and well cemented and bound together by cramps * of iron and lead. The Bishop perceiving the Prefect at a stand, advised him to direct his course to some other place; and then besought the Almighty to direct him in the way of razing that monument of idolatry. His prayer was heard. On the following morning, a labouring man, who obtained his living by carrying burdens, and was utterly unacquainted with even the first rudiments of architecture, waited upon the Bishop, and engaged, on very easy terms, to level this temple of Jupiter with the ground. Marcellus accepted the proposal, and the affair was executed in the following manner. This somewhat novel engineer, having examined the situation of the edifice, and finding it surrounded by a gallery, supported by stately pillars ten yards in circumference, judged that it would be more to his help to weaken the foundation of the structure, than to attack the

* "Cramps."—In architecture, a cramp is a piece of metal, bent, or dovetailed, at each end, for the purpose of holding two blocks, of any material, firmly together.

body of the edifice immediately: he undermined the pillars themselves, which he supported with beams of timber. When he had thus rendered insecure three of the most considerable of these pillars, he put fire to the timber, and the pillars fell, and drew twelve more with them, and thus brought down one side of the edifice. The people flocked together from all parts of the town, praising the Most High, who had triumphed over his enemies. The zealous Prelate made the same havoc wherever he found temples erected in honour of the false gods, as the most expeditious and efficacious means for gaining the deluded people to the worship of the one true God. Supported by what forces he had in the country, the Prefect prosecuted the same work with all imaginable success. There was at that time a spacious temple at Aulo, in the territory of Apamea, which the Pagans defended with their might. Marcellus, although out of order, through bodily indisposition, endeavoured to accompany the soldiers to that fortress of idolatry. He was so lame, that he could neither pursue the enemy, nor provide for his own safety by flight; and therefore thought fit to keep at a proper distance, and give the necessary orders for attack. While the Emperor's forces were employed in their work, a body of the Pagans sallied forth, seized the Bishop, and burnt him alive. As he was alone when this happened, it was some time before it was generally known. When it was disclosed, and the authors of that barbarous action were discovered, the sons of Marcellus were for inflicting summary justice on the murderers; but this motion was opposed and overruled by the most judicious and pious persons of the province, who were of opinion, that the young men ought rather to thank God for the favour their father had received at his hands, and the glory of martyrdom, which he had thus obtained. The Synod of the province also refused to revenge on his barbarous enemies a death so happy for Marcellus, and so glorious for his family.*

Although the career of Marcellus terminated so fatally, the work of demolition was not long content with less famous edifices, these outworks of Paganism; it aspired to attack again one of its strongest citadels, and, by the public destruction of one of the most celebrated temples in the world, to announce that polytheism had for ever lost its hold upon the minds of men. It was considered the highest praise of the magnificent temple in Edessa, of which the roof was of remarkable construction, and which contained in its secret sanctuary certain very celebrated statues of wrought iron, and whose fall had excited the indignant eloquence of Libanius, to compare it to the Serapion in Alexandria. The Serapion at that time appeared secure in the superstition which connected its inviolable sanctity and the honour of its god with the rise and fall of the Nile, with the fertility and existence of Egypt, and, as Egypt was the granary of the East, of Constantinople. The Pagans had little apprehension that the Serapion itself, before many years, would be levelled with the ground. The temple of Serapis, next to that of Jupiter in the capitol, was

* Sozom., Hist. Eccles., lib. vii., cap. 15; Theodoret., Hist. Eccles., lib. v. cap. 21.

the proudest monument of pagan religious architecture. Like the more celebrated structures of the East, and that of Jerusalem in its glory, it comprehended within its precincts a vast mass of buildings, of which the temple itself formed the centre. It was built on an artificial hill, in the old quarter of the city called Rhacotis, to which the ascent was by a hundred steps. All the substructure was vaulted over; and in these dark chambers, which communicated with each other, were supposed to be carried on the most fearful and, to the Christian, abominable mysteries. All around the spacious level platform were the habitations of the Priests and the ascetics dedicated to the worship of the god. Within these outworks of the city rather than temple was a square, surrounded on all sides with a magnificent portico. In the centre arose the temple, on pillars of enormous magnitude and beautiful proportion. The work, either of Alexander himself or of the first Ptolemy, aspired to unite the colossal grandeur of Egyptian with the fine harmony of Grecian art. The god himself was the especial object of adoration throughout the whole country, and every part of the empire into which the Egyptian worship had penetrated, but more particularly in Alexandria; and the wise policy of the Ptolemies had blended together, under this pliant and all-embracing religion, the different races of their subjects. Egyptian and Greek met as worshippers of Serapis. The Serapis of Egypt was said to have been adored for ages at Sinope: he was transported from that city with great pomp and splendour, to be re-incorporated, as it were, and re-identified with his ancient prototype. While the Egyptians placed in Serapis the great vivific principle of the universe, the fecundating Nile, holding the Nilometer for his sceptre, the Lord of Amen-ti, the President of the regions beyond the grave; the Greeks at the same time recognised the blended attributes of their Dionysius, Helios, Æsculapius, and Hades. The colossal statue of Serapis embodied these various attributes.* It filled the sanctuary; its outstretched and all-embracing arms touched the walls; the right the one, the left the other. It was said to have been the work of Sesostris: it was made of all the metals fused together, gold, silver, copper, iron, lead, and tin: it was inlaid with all kinds of precious stones: the whole was polished, and appeared of an azure colour. The measure, or bushel, the emblem of productiveness, or plenty, crowned its head. By its side stood the symbolic three-headed animal, one the fore-part of a lion, one of a dog, one of a wolf. In this the Greeks saw the type of their poetic Cerberus.† The serpent, the symbol of eternity, wound round the whole, and returned, resting its head on the hand of the god. The more completely, observes Mr. Milman, (from whom on this subject we have quoted largely,) the adoration of Serapis had absorbed the worship of the whole Egyptian pantheon, the more eagerly Christianity

* The statue is described by Macrobius, Saturn. i., 20; Clemens Alexandrin., Exhortat. ad Gent., i., p. 42; Ruffin., Hist. Eccles., lib. xii., cap. 23.

† According to the interpretation of Macrobius, the three heads represented the past, the present, and the future: the rapacious wolf, the past; the central lion, the intermediate present; the fawning dog, the hopeful future. (Milman.)

desired to triumph over the representative of polytheism. However, in the time of Hadrian, the philosophic* party may have endeavoured to blend and harmonize the two faiths, they stood now in their old direct and irreconcilable opposition. The suppression of the internal feuds between the opposite parties in Alexandria, enabled Christianity to direct all its concentred force against Paganism. Theophilus was a man of boldness and activity, eager to seize, and skilful to avail himself of, every opportunity to inflame the popular mind against the Heathens. A Priest of Serapis was accused and convicted of practising those licentious designs against the virtue of the female worshippers, so frequently attributed to the priesthood of the Eastern religions. The noblest and most beautiful women were persuaded to submit to the embraces of the god, whose place, under the favourable darkness caused by the sudden extinction of the lamps in the temple, was filled by the Priest. These inauspicious rumours prepared the inevitable collision. A neglected temple of Osiris, or Dionysius, had been granted by Constantius to the Arians of Alexandria. Theophilus obtained from the Emperor a grant of the vacant site for a new church, to accommodate the increasing numbers of the orthodox Christians. On digging the foundation, there were discovered many of the obscene symbols used in the Bacchic and Osirian mysteries. Theophilus, with more regard to the success of his cause than to decency, exposed these ludicrous or disgusting objects in the public market-place, to the contempt and abhorrence of the people. The Pagans, indignant at this treatment of their sacred symbols, and maddened by the scorn and ridicule of the Christians, took up arms, and demanded severe reprisals. The streets ran with blood, and many Christians who fell in this tumultuous fray received the honours of martyrdom. A philosopher named Olympus placed himself at the head of the pagan party. Olympus had foreseen and predicted the ruin of the external worship of polytheism. He had endeavoured to implant a profound feeling in the hearts of the Pagans, which might survive the destruction of their ordinary objects of worship. "The statues of the gods are but perishable and material images: the eternal intelligences which dwelt within them have withdrawn to the heavens."† Yet Olympus hoped, and at first with his impassioned eloquence succeeded in rousing his pagan compatriots to a bold defiance of the public authorities in support of their religion; faction and rivalry supplied what was wanting to faith; and it appeared that Paganism would likewise boast its army of martyrs,—martyrs, not indeed through patient submission to the persecutor, but in heroic despair perishing with their gods.

The Pagans at first were the aggressors: they sallied from their fortress, the Serapion, seized the unhappy Christians whom they met, forced them to sacrifice on their altar, or slew them upon it, or threw them into the deep trench defiled with the blood and offal of sacrifice. In vain Evagrius, the Prefect of Egypt, and Romanus, the Commander of the troops, appeared before the gates of the tem-

* Milman, History of Christianity, vol. ii., p. 155.
† Sozom., Hist. Eccles., lib. vii., cap. 15.

ple, remonstrated with the garrison, who appeared at the windows, against their barbarities, and menaced them with the just vengeance of the law. They were obliged to withdraw, baffled and disregarded, and to await the orders of the Emperor. Olympus exhorted his followers to the height of religious heroism. "Having made a glorious sacrifice of our enemies, let us immolate ourselves, and perish with our gods." This was more easily said than done. Before the edict of Theodosius arrived, Olympus had disappeared: he had stolen out of the temple, and had embarked for Italy. The Christian writers do honour to his sagacity, or to his prophetic powers, at the expense of his courage and fidelity to his party. In the dead of night, when all was slumbering around, and all the gates closed, he heard the Christian Alleluia pealing from a single voice through the silent temple. He acknowledged the sign, or the omen, and anticipated the unfavourable sentence of the Emperor, the fate of his faction, and of his gods. This temporary triumph of Christianity over the powers of darkness was not achieved without a struggle. The Bishop of Alexandria, to whom the temple of Bacchus had, at his own request, been granted by the Emperor, converted the edifice into a Christian church. The statues were removed, the most secret recesses of the temple explored. The Pagans, amazed at so unexpected an exhibition, would not suffer it in silence, but conspired against the Christians, took possession of the temple of Serapis, which large and beautiful structure was placed on an eminence. Here they conveyed their Christian prisoners, put them to the torture, and otherwise maltreated them. The efforts of Romanus to reduce the citadel to submission were utterly in vain. The Heathen, who had shut themselves up in the temple of Serapis, were averse to yield from fear of the punishment that they knew would await their outrageous proceedings, instigated as they were by that craven miscreant, Olympus. When the Emperor was informed of all these occurrences, he declared that the Christians who had been slain were blessed, inasmuch as they had been admitted to the honours of martyrdom, and had suffered in defence of the faith. He offered a free pardon to those by whom they had suffered death, hoping that by this act of clemency they would be the more readily induced to embrace Christianity; and he commanded the demolition of the temples which had been the cause of the sedition. It is said, that when this edict was read in public, the Christians uttered loud shouts of joy, because the Emperor laid the odium of what had occurred upon the Pagans. The people who were guarding the temple of Serapis were so terrified at hearing these shouts, that they took to flight; and the Christians immediately obtained possession of the spot, which they have retained ever since. It is said, that when the temple was being demolished, some stones were found on which were hieroglyphic characters in the form of a cross, which, on being submitted to the inspection of the learned, were interpreted as signifying "the life to come." These characters, Sozomen informs us, led to the conversion of several of the Pagans, as did likewise other inscriptions found in the same place, and which contained predictions of the

destruction of the temple. It was thus that the temple of Serapis was converted into a church: it received the name of the Emperor Arcadius.*

The Eastern Pagans appear to have been but little acquainted with the real character of Theodosius. When the rescript arrived, they laid down their arms, and assembled in peaceful array before the temple, as if they expected the sentence of the Emperor in their own favour.† The officer began: the first words of the rescript plainly intimated the Emperor's abhorrence of idolatry. Cries of triumph from the Christians interrupted the proceedings; the panic-stricken Pagans abandoning the temple and the god. Two of the celebrated Pontiffs, one of Amoun, one of "the Ape," retired to Constantinople, where the first, Ammonius, taught in a school, and continued to deplore the fall of Paganism; Helladius, the other, was known to boast of the part he had taken in the sedition of Alexandria, in which, with his own hands, he had slain nine Christians.‡ The imperial rescript at once went beyond and fell short of the fears of the Pagans. It disdained to exact vengeance for the blood of the Christian martyrs, who had been so happy as to lay down their lives for their Redeemer; but it commanded the destruction of the idolatrous temples; it confiscated all the ornaments, and ordered the statues to be melted or broken up for the benefit of the poor. Theophilus hastened in his triumphant zeal to execute the ordinance of the Emperor. Marching with the Prefect at the head of the military, they ascended the steps to the temple of Serapis. They surveyed the vacant chambers of the Priests and the ascetics; they paused to pillage the library;§ they entered the deserted sanctuary; they stood in the presence of the god. The sight of this colossal image, for centuries an object of worship, struck awe to the hearts of the Christians themselves. They stood silent, inactive, trembling. The Archbishop alone maintained his courage: he commanded a soldier to proceed to the assault. The soldier struck the statue with his hatchet on the knee. The blow echoed through the breathless hall; but no sound or sign of divine vengeance ensued; the roof of the temple fell not to crush the sacrilegious assailant, nor did the pavement heave and quake beneath his feet. The emboldened soldier climbed up to the head, and struck it off: it rolled upon the ground. Serapis gave no sign of life; but a large colony of rats, disturbed in their peaceful abode, ran about on all sides. The passions of the multitude are always in extremes. From breathless awe they passed at once to ungovernable mirth. The work of destruction went on

* Sozom., Hist. Eccles., lib. vii., cap. 15.

† If the oration of Libanius, exhorting the Emperor to revenge the death of Julian, was really presented to Theodosius, it betrays something of the same ignorance. He seems to think his arguments not unlikely to meet with success; at all events, he appears not to have the least notion that Theodosius would not respect the memory of the apostate. (Milman.)

‡ Socrat., Hist. Eccles., lib. v., cap. 16. Helladius is mentioned in a law of Theodosius the Younger, as a celebrated grammarian, elevated to certain honours. This law is, however, dated 425, at least five-and-thirty years after this transaction.

§ "Nos vidimus armaria librorum; quibus direptis, exinanita ea a nostris hominibus, nostris temporibus memorant." (Oros., lib. vi., cap. 15.)

amid peals of laughter, coarse jests, and shouts of acclamation ; and as the fragments of the huge body of Serapis were dragged through the streets, the Pagans, with that revulsion of feeling common to the superstitious populace, joined in the insult and mockery against their unresisting and self-abandoned god.* The solid walls and deep foundations of the temple offered more insurmountable resistance to the baffled zeal of the Christians ; the work of demolition proceeded but slowly with the massive architecture ; and some time after, a church was erected in the precincts to look down upon the ruins of idolatry, which still frowned in desolate grandeur upon their conquerors.† Yet the Christians, even after their complete triumph, were not without some lingering terrors ; the Pagans, not without hopes that a fearful vengeance would be exacted from the land for this sacrilegious extirpation of their ancient deities. Serapis was either the Nile, or the deity who presided over the periodical inundations of the river. The Nilometer, which measured the rise of the waters, was kept in the temple. Would the indignant river refuse its fertilizing moisture, keep sullenly within its banks, and leave the ungrateful land blasted with perpetual drought and barrenness? As the time of the inundation approached, all Egypt was in a state of trembling suspense. Long beyond the accustomed day, the waters remained at their usual level : there was no sign of overflowing. The people began to murmur ; the murmurs swelled into indignant remonstrances ; the usual rites and sacrifices were demanded from the reluctant Prefect, who despatched a hasty messenger to the Emperor for instructions. There was every appearance of a general insurrection ; the Pagans triumphed in their turn ; but before the answer of the Emperor arrived,—which replied in uncompromising faith, "that if the inundation of the river could only be obtained by magic, and impious rites, let it remain dry ; the fertility of Egypt must not be purchased by an act of infidelity to God," ‡—suddenly, the waters began to swell, an inundation more full and extensive than usual spread over the land ; and the versatile Pagans had now no course, but to join again with the Christians in mockeries against the impotence of their gods.

But the next hostile measure was still more unexpected. Notwithstanding the manifest authority assumed by Christianity, and by one

* They were said to have discovered several of the tricks by which the Priests of Serapis imposed on the credulity of their worshippers. An aperture of the wall was so contrived, that the light of the sun, at a particular time, fell on the face of Serapis. The sun was then thought to visit Serapis ; and at the moment of their meeting, the flashing light threw a smile on the lips of the deity. There is another story of a magnet on the roof, which, as in the fable about Mahomet's coffin, raised either a small statue of the idol, or the sun in a car with four horses, to the roof, and there held it suspended. A Christian withdrew the magnet, and the car fell, and was dashed to pieces on the pavement. (Milman.)

† The Christians rejoiced in discovering the cross in various parts of the building : they were inclined to suppose it miraculous, or prophetic of their triumph. But, in fact, the *crux ansata* is a common hieroglyphic, a symbol of life. (Milman.)

‡ Improbable as it may seem, that such an answer should be given by a statesman like Theodosius, yet it is strongly characteristic of the times. The Emperor neither denies the power of the malignant demons worshipped by the idolaters, nor the efficacy of enchantments, to obtain their favour, and to force from them the retarded overflow of the river. (Milman.)

of the Christian Prelates, best qualified by his own determined character to wield at his will the weak and irresolute Gratian; notwithstanding the long ill-suppressed murmurs, and now bold and authoritative remonstrances, against all toleration, all connivance at Heathen idolatry; it might have been thought that any other victim would have been chosen from the synod of gods; that all other statues would have been thrown prostrate, all other worship proscribed, before that of Victory. The service of the altar was not considered incompatible with the command of armies; the Romans, after their consulships and triumphs, aspired to the place of Pontiff, or of Augur; the seats of Cicero and Pompey were filled, in the fourth century, by the most illustrious members of the senate; and the dignity of their birth reflected additional splendour on their sacerdotal character. The fifteen Priests who composed the College of Pontiffs enjoyed a more distinguished rank as the companions of their Sovereign; and the Christian Emperors condescended to accept the robe and ensigns which were appropriated to the office of Supreme Pontiff. But when Gratian ascended the throne, more scrupulous, or more enlightened, he sternly rejected those profane symbols; applied to the service of the state, or of the church, the revenues of the Priests and vestals; abolished their honours and immunities; and dissolved the ancient fabric of Roman superstition, which was supported by the opinions and habits of eleven hundred years. Paganism was still the constitutional religion of the senate. The hall, or temple, in which they assembled, was adorned by the statue and altar of Victory; a majestic female standing on a globe, with flowing garments, expanded wings, and a crown of laurel in her out-stretched hand. The Senators were sworn on the altar of the goddess, to observe the laws of the Emperor and of the empire; and a solemn offering of wine and of incense was the ordinary prelude of their public deliberations. The removal of this ancient monument was the only injury which Constantius had offered to the superstition of the Romans. The altar of Victory was again restored by Julian, tolerated by Valentinian, and once more banished from the senate by the zeal of Gratian. But the Emperor yet spared the statues of the gods, which were exposed to the public veneration; four hundred and twenty-four temples, or chapels, still remained to satisfy the devotion of the people; and in every quarter of Rome the delicacy of the Christians was offended by the fumes of idolatrous sacrifice. But the faithful formed the least numerous party in the senate of Rome, and it was only by their absence that they could express their dissent from the legal, though profane, acts of a pagan majority. Incessantly, the dying embers of freedom were, for a moment, revived and inflamed by the breath of fanaticism. Four respectable deputations were successively voted to the imperial court, to represent the grievances of the priesthood and the senate, and to solicit the restoration of the altar of Victory. The conduct of this important business was intrusted to the eloquent Symmachus, a wealthy and noble Senator, who united the sacred characters of Pontiff and Augur with the civil dignities of Proconsul of Africa, and Prefect of the city. This nobleman is said to have

commanded the respect, and even deserved the common attachment, of all his countrymen: he ventured, a rare example in those days, to interfere between the tyranny of the Sovereign, and the menaced welfare of the people.* An uncorrupt Magistrate, he deprecated the increasing burdens of unnecessary taxes, which weighed down the people; he dared to suggest, that the eager petitions for office should be at once rejected, and the worthiest chosen out of the unpretending multitude. The breast of Symmachus was animated by the warmest zeal for the cause of expiring Paganism, and his religious antagonists lamented the abuse of his genius, and the inefficacy of his moral virtues. He mourned in bitter humiliation over the acts of Gratian; the removal of the statue of Victory; the abrogation of the immunities of the pagan priesthood: he hoped to obtain from the justice, or perhaps the fears, of the young Valentinian, that which had been refused by Gratian. The senate met under his authority: a petition was drawn up, and presented in the name of that venerable body to the Emperor. In this composition Symmachus lavished all his eloquence. His oration is written with vigour, with dignity, with elegance.† But in the feeble and apologetic tone, we perceive at once, that it is the artful defence of an almost hopeless cause; it is cautious to timidity; dexterous; elaborately conciliatory; moderate from fear of offending, rather than from tranquil dignity. Ambrose, on the other hand, writes with all the fervid and careless energy of one confident in his cause, and who knows that he is appealing to an audience already pledged by their own passions to his side; he has not to obviate objections, to reconcile difficulties, to sue or to propitiate; his contemptuous and criminating language has only to inflame zeal, to quicken resentment and scorn. He is flowing down on the full tide of human passion, and his impulse but accelerates and strengthens the rapid current. The orator whose petition is extant to the Emperor Valentinian, was evidently conscious of the difficulty and danger of the office which he had assumed. He cautiously avoids every topic which might appear to reflect on the religion of his Sovereign; humbly declares, that prayers and entreaties are his only arms; and artfully draws his arguments from the schools of rhetoric, rather than from those of philosophy. Symmachus endeavours to seduce the imagination of a young Prince, by displaying the attributes of the goddess of Victory; he insinuates that the confiscation of the revenues which were consecrated to the service of the gods, was a measure unworthy of his liberal and disinterested character; and he maintains, that the Roman sacrifices would be deprived of their force and energy, if they were no longer celebrated at the expense as well as in the name of the republic. Even scepticism is

* Symmachus, who was invested with all the civil and sacerdotal honours, represented the Emperor under the two characters of *Pontifex Maximus* and *Princeps Senatûs*. See the proud inscription at the head of his works.

† Heyne has expressed himself strongly on the superiority of Symmachus to Ambrose. "Argumentorum delectu, vi, pondere, aculeis, non minùs admirabilis illa est quàm prudentiâ, cautione, ac verecundiâ: quàm tanto magis sentias si verbosam et inanem, interdum calumniosam et veteratoriam declamationem Ambrosii compares." (Censur. Ingen. et Mor. Q. A. Symmachi. in Heyne Opuscul.)

made to supply an apology for superstition. The great and incomprehensible *secret* of the universe eludes the inquiry of man. Where reason cannot instruct, custom may be permitted to guide; and every nation seems to consult the dictates of prudence by a faithful attachment to those rites and opinions which have received the sanction of ages. If those ages have been crowned with glory and prosperity, if the devout people have frequently obtained the blessings which they have solicited at the altars of the gods, it must appear still more advisable to persist in the same salutary practice, and not to risk the unknown perils that may attend any rash innovations. The test of antiquity and success was applied with singular advantage to the religion of Numa; and Rome herself, the celestial genius that presided over the fates of the city, is introduced by the orator to plead her own cause before the tribunal of the Emperors. "Most excellent Princes," says the venerable matron, "fathers of your country, pity and respect my age, which has hitherto flowed in an uninterrupted course of piety. Since I do not repent, permit me to continue in the practice of my ancient rites. Since I am born free, allow me to enjoy my domestic institutions. This religion has reduced the world under my laws. These rites have repelled Hannibal from the city, and the Gauls from the capitol. Were my grey hairs reserved for such intolerable disgrace? I am ignorant of the new system that I am required to adopt; but I am well assured that the correction of old age is always an ungrateful and ignominious office."* The fears of the people supplied what the discretion of the orator had suppressed; and the calamities which afflicted or threatened the declining empire were unanimously imputed by the Pagans to the new religion of Christ and of Constantine.†

Ambrose was at hand to confront the eloquent Pagan, and to prohibit any fatal concession. Far different is the tone and manner of the Archbishop of Milan. He asserts in plain terms, says Mr. Milman, the unquestionable obligation of a Christian Sovereign to permit no part of the public revenue to be devoted to the maintenance of idolatry. Their Roman ancestors were to be treated with reverence; but in a question of religion they were to consider God alone. He who advises such grants as those demanded by the suppliants is guilty of sacrifice. Gradually he rises to still more imperious language, and unveils all the terrors of the sacerdotal authority. "The Emperor who shall be guilty of such concessions will find that the Bishops will neither endure nor connive at his sin. If he enter a church, he will find no Priest, or one who will defy his authority. The church will indignantly reject the gifts of him who has shared them with Gentile temples. The altar disdains the offerings of him who has made offerings to images. It is written, 'Man cannot serve two masters.'" Ambrose, emboldened, as it were, by his success,

* See the fifty-fourth epistle of the tenth book of Symmachus. In the form and disposition of his ten books of Epistles, he imitated the younger Pliny; whose rich and florid style he was supposed by his friends to equal or excel. But the luxuriancy of Symmachus consists of barren leaves, without fruits, and even without flowers. Few facts, and few sentiments, can be extracted from his verbose correspondence. (Gibbon.)

† Gibbon, Decline and Fall; Milman's Notes, second edit., vol. iii., p. 6.

ventures, in his second letter, to treat the venerable and hallowed traditions of Roman glory with contempt. "How long did Hannibal insult the gods of Rome! It was the goose and not the deity that saved the capitol. Did Jupiter speak in the goose? Where were the gods in all the defeats, some of them but recent, of the pagan Emperors? Was not the altar of Victory then standing?" He insults the number, the weaknesses, the marriages, of the vestal virgins. "If the same munificence were shown to Christian virgins, the beggared treasury would be exhausted by the claims. Are not the baths, the porticoes, the streets, still crowded with images? Must they still keep their place in the great council of the empire? You compel to worship if you restore the altar. And who is this deity? Victory is a gift, and not a power; she depends on the courage of the legions, not on the influence of the religion; a mighty deity, who is bestowed by the numbers of an army, or the doubtful issue of a battle!" * Such, however, proved to be the death-struggle of Paganism under the auspices of Theodosius: nevertheless, a re-action took place in the West, which for a period threatened much commotion. The pernicious attachment to the Arian sect which Valentinian had imbibed from the example and instructions of the Empress Justina, was soon erased by the lessons of a more orthodox education. His growing zeal for the faith of Nice, and his filial reverence for the character and authority of Ambrose, disposed the faithful to entertain the most favourable opinion of the virtues of the young Emperor of the West.† They applauded his chastity and temperance, his contempt of pleasure, his application to business, and his tender affection for his two sisters; which could not, however, seduce his impartial equity to pronounce an unjust sentence against the meanest of his subjects. But this amiable youth, before he had accomplished the twentieth year of his age, was oppressed by domestic treason; and the empire was again involved in the horrors of a civil war. Arbogastes,‡ a gallant soldier of the nation of the Franks, held the second rank in the service of Gratian. On the death of his master he joined the standard of Theodosius; contributed, by his valour and military conduct, to the destruction of Maximus; and was appointed, after the victory, Master-General of the armies of Gaul. His real merit, and apparent fidelity, had gained the confidence both of the Prince and people; his boundless liberality corrupted the allegiance of the troops; and whilst he was universally esteemed as the pillar of the state, the bold and crafty barbarian was secretly determined either to rule or to ruin the empire of the West. The important commands of the army were distributed among the Franks; the creatures of Arbogastes were promoted to all the honours and offices of the civil

* Milman, History of Christianity, vol. iii., p. 172.

† See Ambrose, tom. ii., de Obit. Valentin., cap. 15, &c., p. 1178, cap. 36, &c., p. 1184. When the young Emperor gave an entertainment, he fasted himself; he refused to see a handsome actress, &c. Since he ordered his wild beasts to be killed, it is ungenerous in Philostorgius (lib. xi., cap. 1) to reproach him with the love of that amusement.

‡ Zosimus (lib. iv., p. 275) praises the enemy of Theodosius. But he is detested by Socrates, lib. v., cap. 25; and Orosius, lib. vii., cap. 35.

government, the progress of the conspiracy removed every faithful servant from the presence of Valentinian; and the Emperor, without power, and without intelligence, insensibly sunk into the precarious and dependent condition of a captive.* The indignation which he expressed, though it might arise only from the rash and impatient temper of youth, may be candidly ascribed to the generous spirit of a Prince, who felt that he was not unworthy to reign. He secretly invited the Archbishop of Milan to undertake the office of a mediator, as the pledge of his sincerity, and the guardian of his safety. He contrived to apprize the Emperor of the East of his helpless situation; and he declared, that unless Theodosius could speedily march to his assistance, he must attempt to escape from the palace, or rather prison, of Vienna in Gaul, where he had imprudently fixed his residence in the midst of the hostile faction. But the hopes of relief were distant and doubtful; and as every day furnished some new provocation, the Emperor, without strength or counsel, too hastily resolved to risk an immediate contest with his powerful General. He received Arbogastes on the throne; and, as the Count approached with some appearance of respect, delivered to him a paper which dismissed him from all his employments. "My authority," replied Arbogastes, with insulting coolness, "does not depend on the smile or the frown of a Monarch;" and he contemptuously threw the paper on the ground. The indignant Sovereign snatched at the sword of one of the guards, which he struggled to draw from its scabbard; and it was not without some degree of violence that he was prevented from using the deadly weapon against his enemy, or against himself. A few days after this extraordinary quarrel, in which he had exposed his resentment and his weakness, the unfortunate Valentinian was found strangled in his apartment; and some pains were employed to disguise the manifest guilt of Arbogastes, and to persuade the world that the death of the young Emperor had been the voluntary effect of his own despair.

The political hemisphere was again hung with blackness, and "the dogs" of civil war were again let loose. The prudence of Arbogastes had prepared for the success of his sanguinary but ambitious designs; and the provincials, in whose breasts every sentiment of patriotism or loyalty was extinguished, expected, with tame resignation, the unknown master whom the choice of a Frank might place on the imperial throne. But some remains of pride and prejudice still opposed the elevation of Arbogastes himself, and the judicious barbarian thought it more advisable to reign under the name of some dependent Roman. He bestowed the purple on the rhetorician Eugenius, whom he had already raised from the place of his domestic Secretary to the rank of the Master of the Offices. In the course both of his private and public service, the Count had always approved the attachment and abilities of Eugenius; his learning and eloquence, supported by the gravity of his manners, recommended him to the

* Gregory of Tours, (lib. ii., cap. 9, p. 165,) in the second volume of the historians of France, has preserved a curious fragment of Sulpitius Alexander, an historian far more valuable than himself.

esteem of the people ; and the reluctance with which he seemed to ascend the throne, may inspire a favourable prejudice of his virtue and moderation. The Ambassadors of the new Emperor were immediately despatched to the court of Theodosius to communicate, with affected grief, the unfortunate accident of the death of Valentinian ; and, without mentioning the name of Arbogastes, to request that the Monarch of the East would embrace as his lawful colleague the respectable citizen who had obtained the unanimous suffrage of the armies and provinces of the West. Theodosius was justly provoked that the perfidy of a barbarian should have destroyed, in a moment, the labours and the fruit of his former victory ; and he was excited by the tears of his beloved wife, to revenge the fate of her unhappy brother, and once more to assert by arms the violated majesty of the throne. But as the second conquest of the West was a task of difficulty and danger, he dismissed, with splendid presents, and an ambiguous answer, the Ambassadors of Eugenius ; and almost two years were consumed in the preparations for the civil war. Before he formed any decisive resolution, the Emperor was anxious to discover the will of Heaven ; and as the progress of Christianity had silenced the oracles of Delphi and Dodona, he consulted an Egyptian Monk, who possessed, in the opinion of the age, the gift of miracles, and the knowledge of futurity. Eutropius, one of the favourite eunuchs of the palace of Constantinople, embarked for Alexandria, from whence he sailed up the Nile, as far as the city of Lycopolis, or of Wolves, in the remote province of Thebais. In the neighbourhood of that city, and on the summit of a lofty mountain, the holy John had constructed, with his own hands, a humble cell, in which he had dwelt above fifty years without opening his door, without seeing the face of a woman, and without tasting any food that had been prepared by fire, or any human art. Five days of the week he spent in prayer and meditation ; but on Saturdays and Sundays he regularly opened a small window, and gave audience to the crowd of suppliants who successively flowed from every part of the Christian world. The eunuch of Theodosius approached the window with respectful steps, proposed his questions concerning the event of a civil war, and soon returned with a favourable oracle, which animated the courage of the Emperor by the assurance of a bloody but infallible victory.* The accomplishment of the prediction was forwarded by all the means which human prudence could supply. The industry of the two Master-Generals, Stilicho and Timasius, was directed to recruit the numbers, and to revive the discipline, of the Roman legions. The formidable troops of barbarians marched under the ensigns of their national chieftains. The Iberian, the Arab, and the Goth, who gazed on each other with mutual astonishment, were enlisted in the service of the same Prince ; and the renowned Alaric acquired, in the school of Theodosius, the knowledge of the art of war, which he afterwards fatally exerted for the destruction of Rome.†

* Sozom., Hist. Eccles., lib. vii., cap. 22. Claudian mentions the journey of the eunuch ; but he most contemptuously derides the Egyptian dreams, and the oracles of the Nile.

† Gibbon, Decline and Fall, second edit., vol. ii., p. 553, notes by Milman.

The Roman historian represents the Emperor of the West, or, to speak more properly, his General, Arbogastes, as instructed by the misconduct and misfortune of Maximus, how dangerous it might prove to extend the line of defence against a skilful antagonist who was free to press or to suspend, to contract or to multiply, his various methods of attack. Arbogastes fixed his station on the confines of Italy: the troops of Theodosius were permitted to occupy, without resistance, the provinces of Pannonia, as far as the foot of the Julian Alps; and even the passes of the mountains were negligently, or perhaps artfully, abandoned to the bold invader. He descended from the hills, and beheld, with some astonishment, the formidable camp of the Gauls and the Germans, that covered with arms and tents the open country which extends to the walls of Aquileia, and the banks of the Frigidus, or cold-river.* This narrow theatre of the war, circumscribed by the Alps and the Adriatic, did not allow much room for the operations of military skill; the spirit of Arbogastes would have disdained a pardon; his guilt extinguished the hope of a negotiation, and Theodosius was impatient to satisfy his glory and revenge by the chastisement of the assassins of Valentinian. Without weighing the natural and artificial obstacles that opposed his efforts, the Emperor of the East immediately attacked the fortifications of his rivals, assigned the post of honourable danger to the Goths, and cherished a secret wish, that the bloody conflict might diminish the pride and numbers of the conquerors. Ten thousand of those auxiliaries, and Bacurius, General of the Iberians, died bravely on the field of battle. But the victory was not purchased by their blood: the Gauls maintained their advantage, and the approach of night protected the disorderly flight, or retreat, of the troops of Theodosius. The Emperor retired to the adjacent hills, where he passed a disconsolate night,† without sleep, without provisions, and without hopes; except that strong assurance which, under the most desperate circumstances, the independent mind may derive from the contempt of fortune and of life. The triumph of Eugenius was celebrated by the insolent and dissolute joy of his camp; whilst the active and vigilant Arbogastes secretly detached a considerable body of troops to occupy the passes of the mountains, and to encompass the rear of the Eastern army. The dawn of day discovered to the eyes of Theodosius the extent and the extremity of his danger; but his apprehensions were soon dispelled by a friendly messenger from the leaders of those troops, who expressed their inclination to desert the standard of the tyrant. The honourable and lucrative rewards which they stipulated as the price of their perfidy, were granted without hesitation; and as ink and paper could not easily be procured, the Emperor subscribed

* The Frigidus, a small, though memorable, stream in the country of Goretz, now called the Vipao, falls into the Sontius, or Lisonzo, above Aquileia, some miles from the Adriatic. See D'Anville, Ancient and Modern Maps; and the Italia Antiqua of Cluverius.

† Theodoret affirms, the Apostle John and the Evangelist Philip appeared to the waking or sleeping Emperor on horseback, &c. This is the first instance of apostolic chivalry, which afterwards became so popular in Spain and in the Crusades.

on his own tablets the ratification of the treaty. The spirit of his soldiers was revived by this seasonable re-inforcement; and they again marched, with confidence, to surprise the camp of a tyrant, whose principal officers appeared to distrust either the justice or the success of his arms. In the heat of the battle, a violent tempest, such as is often felt among the Alps, suddenly arose from the East. The army of Theodosius was sheltered by their position from the impetuosity of the wind, which blew a cloud of dust in the faces of the enemy, disordered their ranks, wrested their weapons from their hands, and diverted, or repelled, their ineffectual javelins. This accidental advantage was skilfully improved: the violence of the storm was magnified by the superstition of the Gauls; and they yielded, without shame, to the invisible powers of Heaven, who seemed to militate on the side of the Emperor. His victory was decisive; and the deaths of his two rivals were distinguished only by the difference of their characters. The rhetorician, Eugenius, who had almost acquired the dominion of the world, was reduced to implore the mercy of the conqueror; and the unrelenting soldiers separated his head from his body, as he lay prostrate at the feet of Theodosius. Arbogastes, after the loss of a battle, in which he had discharged the duties of a soldier and a General, wandered several days among the mountains. But when he was convinced that his cause was desperate, and his escape impracticable, the reckless barbarian imitated the example of the ancient Romans, and turned his sword against his own breast. The fate of the empire was determined in a narrow corner of Italy; and the legitimate successor of the house of Valentinian embraced the Archbishop of Milan, and graciously received the submission of the provinces of the West. Those provinces were involved in the guilt of rebellion, while the inflexible courage of Ambrose * alone had resisted the claims of successful usurpation. With a manly freedom, which might have been fatal to any other subject, the Archbishop rejected the gifts of Eugenius,† declined his correspondence, and withdrew himself from Milan, to avoid the odious presence of a tyrant, whose downfal he predicted in

* It is related of Ambrose, that, while sleeping in his cradle, a swarm of bees settled on his lips, and then winged their way towards heaven. From this circumstance his father is said to have predicted his future greatness and ability. His works display neither the power nor the erudition of some of the other Fathers; but they are not deficient in eloquence; and while the historian may gather from parts of them very useful information on the state of manners at the period, the general reader will find, in other portions of them, the most admirable instruction on the great duties of a Christian. His principal productions, under the former head, are his numerous letters, his treatises on Penance and Virginity, and the Book of Mysteries, or Sacraments. Under the latter, his chief work is the Book of Offices, to which may be added numerous expositions of the Psalms, and other portions of Scripture, in the form of homilies or sermons. As a theologian, or a scholar, Ambrose was not much regarded by the great men of his age. Jerome describes his treatise on the Holy Ghost as a production in which there is nothing logical, nothing masculine, nothing moving, nothing convincing; in every respect feeble and languid; but polished, dressed up, and painted with strange colours. (Stebbing.)

† Arbogastes and his Emperor had openly espoused the pagan party, according to Ambrose and Augustine. (See Le Beau, lib. v., cap. 40.) Beugnot (Histoire de la Destruction du Paganisme) is more full, and perhaps somewhat fanciful, on this remarkable re-action in favour of Paganism.

discreet and ambiguous language. The merit of Ambrose was applauded by the conqueror, who secured the attachment of the people by his alliance with the church; and the clemency of Theodosius is ascribed to the humane intercession of the Archbishop.*

With this victory of Theodosius the vain hopes of Paganism expired. The Emperor had published in the East the last and most peremptory of those edicts which, gradually rising in the sternness of their language, proclaimed the ancient worship a treasonable and capital crime. In its minute and searching phrases it seemed eagerly to pursue Paganism to its most secret and private lurking-places. Thenceforth no man of any station, rank, or dignity, in any place, in any city, was to offer an innocent victim in sacrifice: the more harmless worship of the *penates*, or household gods, which lingered, probably, more deeply in the hearts of the Pagans, than any other part of their system, not merely by the smoke of victims, but by lamps, incense, and garlands, was equally forbidden. To sacrifice, or to consult the entrails of victims, was constituted high treason, and thereby a capital offence, although with no treasonable intention of calculating the days of the Emperor. It was a crime of sufficient magnitude to infringe the laws of nature, to pry into the secrets of futurity, or to inquire concerning the death of any one. Whoever permitted any heathen rite, hung a tree with chaplets, or raised an altar of turf, forfeited the estate on which the offence was committed. Any house profaned with the smoke of incense, was confiscated to the imperial exchequer. Whoever violated this prohibition, and offered sacrifice either in a public temple, or on the estate of another, was amerced in a fine of twenty-five pounds of gold; (a thousand pounds of our money;) and whoever connived at the offence was liable to the same fine; the Magistrate who neglected to enforce it, to a still heavier penalty. This law, stern and intolerant as it was, spoke, no doubt, the dominant sentiment of the Christian world; † but its repetition by the successors of Theodosius, and the employment of avowed Pagans in many of the high offices of the state and army, may permit us charitably to doubt whether the exchequer was much enriched by the forfeitures, or the sword of the executioner stained with the blood, of conscientious Pagans. Polytheism boasted of no martyrs, and we may still hope, that if called upon to carry its own decrees into effect, its native clemency, though, unhappily, Christian bigotry had already tasted of heretical blood, would have revolted from the sanguinary deed, which it justified in theory, on the authority

* The events of this civil war have been taken from Gibbon, Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, vol. ii., p. 556, second edit., 8vo., Milman's Notes. And he has compiled this part of his history from the following sources, which we have carefully examined. Ambrosii Opera, tom. ii., epist. lxii., p. 1022; Paulinus in Vitâ Ambros., cap. 26—34; Augustin., De Civitat. Dei, lib. v., cap. 26; Orosius, lib. vii., cap. 35; Sozom., Hist. Eccles., lib. vii., cap. 24; Theodoret., Hist. Eccles., lib. v., cap. 24; Zosimus, Hist., lib. iv., pp. 281, 282.

† Gibbon has quoted from Le Clerc a fearful sentence of Augustine addressed to the Donatists. "Quis nostrûm, quis vestrûm non laudat leges ab Imperatoribus datas adversus sacrificia Paganorum? Et certè longè ibi pœna severior constituta est; illius quippe impietatis capitale supplicium est." (Epist. xciii.) But passages amiably inconsistent with this fierce tone might be quoted on the other side.

of the Old Testament, with the vital principles of the Gospel.* Rome heard of the triumphs of Theodosius, and perhaps witnessed the presence of the conqueror, who, in the East, had already countenanced the most destructive attacks against the temples of the gods. The Christian poet† describes a solemn debate of the Senate on the claims of Jupiter and of Christ to the adoration of the Roman people. According to his account, Jupiter was out-voted by a large number of suffrages; the decision was followed by a general desertion of their ancestral deities by the obsequious minority; the old hereditary names, the Annii and the Probi, the Anicii and Olybii, the Paulini and Bassi, the popular Gracchi, six hundred families, at once passed over to the Christian cause. The pagan historian, to a certain degree, confirms the fact of the deliberate discussion, but differs as to the result. The Senate, he states, firmly, but respectfully, adhered to their ancient deities.‡ But the last argument of the pagan advocates was fatal to their cause. Theodosius refused any longer to assign funds from the public revenue to maintain the charge of the idolatrous worship. The Senate remonstrated, that if they ceased to be supported at the national cost, they would cease to be national rites. This argument was more likely to confirm than to shake the determination of the Christian Emperor. From this time the temples were deserted; the Priests and Priestesses, deprived of their maintenance, were scattered abroad. The public temples still stood, nor was it forbidden to worship within them without sacrifice; the private, and family, or Gentile deities still preserved their influence. The Paganism of the West was buried in the ruins of the empire. Gratian had dissevered the supremacy of the national religion from the imperial dignity; he had confiscated the property of the temples. Still, however, the outward form of Paganism remained. Some priesthoods were still handed down in regular descent; the rites of various deities, even of Mithra and Cybele, were celebrated without sacrifice, or with sacrifice, furtively performed; the corporation of the aruspices was not abolished. There still likewise remained a special provision for certain festivals and public amusements;§ and the expenses of the sacred banquets and of the games were defrayed by the state.

While Paganism, like the pyramid reversed, was nodding to its fall, a few pursued the easy tenor of their way, unruffled by the threat of persecution, or the prospects of worldly emolument and temporal power and grandeur. Among these we must enumerate Acacius, the Prelate of Beræa, in Syria. He was from his youth brought up to the profession of ascetic monasticism, and was rigid in observing all the

* "Quis eorum comprehensus est in sacrificio (cum his legibus ista prohiberentur) et non negavit?" (Augustin., in Psalm. cxx., quoted by Gibbon from Lardner.)

† Sexcentas numerare domos de sanguine prisco
Nobilium licet, ad Christi signacula versas
Turpis ab idoli vasto emersisse profundo.
(Prudent. ad Symmach.)

Prudentius has probably amplified some considerable desertion of the wavering and dubious believers.

‡ Zosim., Hist., lib. iv., cap. 59.

§ It was called, the *vectigal templorum*. *Vectigalia* was the general term for all the regular revenues of the Roman state.

regulations of this mode of life. Zeno and Ajax, two brothers, flourished about the same period. They defended the truth of their religion with invincible intrepidity, and confessed themselves to be Christians so repeatedly in the presence of the Pagans, that they were subjected to the most cruel treatment. Heresies also sprung up like mushrooms in a newly-mown meadow, chiefly through the various ramifications of Arianism. The Donatists retained all their former ferocity. The Novatians found in the candid historian Socrates, one who gave to the world authentic information respecting them, having himself been acquainted with the son of one of their Presbyters. The general church, though surely right in its principle of opposition to the particular point of Novatian inflexibility, yet afterwards abused the license of re-admission into the church granted to offenders; and as discipline relaxed in various places, all kinds of crime abounded. The people of Phrygia and Pamphylia, being habitually an abstemious people, averse to pleasures and to the indulgence of sensuality, were, on that account, the more disposed to admit the severities of Novatianism.* About this time a party of them separated themselves still farther from the general church, by appointing, in a Synod, that Easter should be observed at the same time that the Jews kept the feast of unleavened bread. But as Agelius, the Novatian Bishop of Constantinople, and other more celebrated Prelates of their denomination, were not present, a schism was formed from this circumstance among them. Agelius presided forty years over their church at Constantinople, and died in the sixth year of Theodosius. When he was near his end, he ordained Sisinnius to be his successor, a Presbyter of the church, of great learning, who had been instructed by Maximus, the famous friend of Julian. The flock of Agelius murmured, because he had not ordained Marcian, a man of eminent piety, by whose means they had weathered in safety the persecution of Valens. The aged Bishop, willing to pacify them, ordained Marcian, and directed that he should be his immediate successor, and that Sisinnius should be the next Bishop to Marcian. Thus slender and scanty are the accounts left us, of a Prelate, who for so many years presided over a great flock in turbulent and trying times. On Marcian's succession, one Sabbatius, a Jew, receiving Christianity, was advanced by him to the office of Presbyter, and in his heart panted after a bishopric. This man undertook to defend the innovation concerning Easter, and, under pretence of greater strictness of life, he withdrew himself from the church, declaring that he could not conscientiously communicate with some members of the congregation. In time, however, his views were laid open, as he attempted to hold separate assemblies. Marcian then found his error in ordaining so ambitious a person, and often said, in his grief, that he wished he had laid hands on thorns rather than on Sabbatius. He took measures, however, to disappoint his ambition. Calling a Council, he sent for Sabbatius, and desired him to lay open the reasons of his disgust. The man informed them, that the difference of opinion concerning Easter was his grievance, as he thought that festival ought to be observed according to the rule of

* Sozom., Hist. Eccles., lib. iv., cap. 28.

the Synod of Pazum. The Bishops, suspecting his designs, obliged him to swear, that he would not attempt to enter their ranks, and then decreed, that the time of observing Easter should be left indifferent, and that no schism should be made in the church on that account. Their design of preserving unity was laudable; but it succeeded not. Sabbatius drew over a number of the simpler sort, and particularly those of Phrygia and Galatia, to his own Jewish mode, and obtained for himself an appointment to the office of Bishop by his followers, in contradiction to his oath. The consequence was, a variety of divisions among the Novatians, concerning the time of Easter, and other frivolous subjects, and the crumbling of this church into contentious parties of different kinds. Little can be said on this subject, but what must occur to the mind of a thinking reader. This most respectable of all the dissenting churches seems to have preserved, for a considerable time, a strictness and purity of discipline and manners; but its essential characteristic of narrow bigotry, in things of no moment, gave occasion to internal divisions among its own members, which, fomented by unprincipled persons, must have perverted them much from the simplicity of the Gospel.*

We have also to take into consideration martyrs of another character, who, from the ranks of the heretics, suffered for the Christian faith as it was held and taught by themselves: there is no reason to doubt but several evinced the same fortitude, the same conscientious devotion to principle, as the martyrs of the orthodox church. Allowing, says Dr. Stebbing, that the maxim of Cyril and Augustine is correct, and that it is not the pain, but the cause, which makes a martyr; yet, we may ask, how can this be applied, to deprive men of the honour of martyrdom who were willing to die rather than change their faith? Or, is it accordant with common justice to deny the praise of devotedness to those who gave as high a proof of their sincerity as can possibly be given by a human being? All that we can rightly say is, that if the principles for which they suffered were not in themselves good, they cannot be viewed with that gratitude and veneration which we must feel for those to whom, under God, we owe the establishment of doctrines essential to our happiness, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; but looking upon them as men suffering for what they believed to be true, they demand our respect; and since they afforded examples of constancy and fortitude, at all times valuable, constituted as we are, they have a powerful claim to our gratitude: so that those who died for the faith to which we ourselves assent, claim in the highest degree our affection and veneration; those who suffered with the same constancy in support of other principles, merit a proportionable share of our admiration and praise; the former standing first in our esteem, because they helped to establish our faith, as well as left us an example of constancy; the latter in an inferior station, inasmuch as it is their example only which claims our regard. But according to the author of the "Apologie pour les Réformateurs," it is impossible that the constancy of a heretic should be anything but madness and folly, or

* Milner, History of the Church, cent. iv., chap. 19, vol. ii., p. 65.

that he should be inspired to die for his heresy by the grace of God, or the movements of his grace; and he consequently ascribes all instances of such martyrdoms to the effects of cupidity, a violent desire of vain-glory, or some other passion of the same kind, equally low and terrestrial. In the same manner, after describing the characteristics of a true martyr in the hour of death, he triumphantly demands, "Is it possible, that the spirit of deceit and illusion, of error and obstinacy, should produce the same movements in a heretic? Is it possible, in short, that a heretic should appear before the public full of joy, blessing God, praying for his persecutors, singing sacred hymns, and proceeding to death with more pleasure than others would escape from it?" "This, I sustain, is impossible," observes M. Jurieu; and he concludes, that the ancients did not mean by their celebrated maxim merely to distinguish those who suffered for the truth from those who suffered for error, but to mark the difference between those who died for righteousness' sake, and those who suffered for their crimes. We have already seen, that, as early as the first century of the Christian era, certain disputatious spirits had arisen in the church, whose proceedings materially affected the unity and internal peace of the infant establishment. The Gnostics, the Nicolaitans, the Cerinthians, and the Ebionites followed hard upon the Apostles themselves; and these early preachers of error were succeeded by Basilides, Marcion, Bardesanes, and the far more celebrated Manes, or Manichæus.* Learning and philosophy have both expended some of their richest stores in the examination of the doctrines which are supposed to have been professed by these various sects; and every intimation we possess of their character leads to the conclusion, that whatever were the intentions or the moral dispositions of their authors, they were essentially opposed to the simple character of the primitive Christian faith. But the church considered the most important part of the religion of the Gospel to consist in the precepts of resignation to the plain, but brief, revelations of the Deity. That it should regard such reasoners, therefore, with suspicion, can admit of no doubt; and it was natural, that when it found them attempting to subvert the faith of humble converts, or leading those to dispute who had scarcely learned the principles of their profession, it should use all lawful expedients to prevent the progress of the schism. Very far, however, were the first directors of the Christian church from being persecutors: their only object was to defend it against the introduction of error; and they employed the means which reason and custom suggest for the maintenance of peace and unity in any society whatever. They had neither the power, nor, as it would seem, the inclination, to use violence against those who dissented from their body; but they were bound not to hold communion with persons as members of the church, who were known to oppose its doctrines; and they therefore signified, by a mode of expression common to their age, and accordant with the customs of other religious societies, that those who thus upheld principles unknown to the fathers were separated from the main body of the faithful. So long as this was done

* Beausobre, Histoire du Manichéisme.

solely from the pure and conscientious motive of preserving the church from the agitations engendered by unquiet spirits, no offence was committed against private liberty. Those who doubted were exposed to no other penalty than that which, if their objections were sincere, could scarcely be felt as a hardship; that is, they were separated from a communion with which they had previously ceased to have any real or proper connexion.

Such, however, observes Dr. Stebbing, is the tendency of human nature to convert necessary precautions into food for unnecessary severity, that there is reason to fear that, as the principles of Christian practice began to lose ground in other respects, it was also corrupted in this, and that orthodoxy was at a very early period made a pretence for measures scarcely conformable with the mild spirit of the Gospel. But, however this may have been, there is not the smallest reason for the conjecture, that the first Christians exercised against each other any personal violence, or that the church viewed its anathemas in any other light, than simple forms of expulsion from its communion. If any of the ancient heretics, therefore, suffered for their religion, it must, doubtless, have been at the hands of the heathen persecutors; and that there is reason to believe that some of them did so suffer, has been already shown.* But the allusion to the martyrdom of the earlier sectarians, by Eusebius, is too brief to make us acquainted with the circumstances under which they fell victims to persecution; and from the manner in which the passage referred to before is worded, it may be questioned whether it ought to be regarded as implying more than that the heretics boasted of having had martyrs amongst them. When, however, we arrive at the period in which the Donatists flourished, all doubt vanishes as to the subject of heretical martyrdoms. This does not affect the argument, that none of the other sectarians willingly suffered death in defence of their opinions; for, as far as we can discover the character of these dissentients, the Gnostics, the Manicheans, and others, were as opposite to the Donatists, as the cool, sceptical Socinian is to the wild Anabaptist of Germany.

The origin of this sect may in some degree account for the zeal, though scarcely for the strange enthusiasm, subsequently exhibited by its members. Donatus, its founder, was one of the Numidian Bishops, who opposed, with just indignation, the advancement of such of the African Clergy as had, in a moment of weakness, delivered up the Scriptures in the Diocletian persecution, and who were then generally stigmatized with the title of *traditores*. By his influence the opposition excited against the election of one or two obnoxious individuals, was quickly extended into a dangerous schism; and in a few years Africa was overrun by a party whose zeal rapidly degenerated into the worst species of licentiousness. Under the name of Circumcelliones, the most furious of these fanatics commenced a war against those who opposed them in opinion, which was in no respect less disgraceful to human feeling than the most violent of civil strifes. The

* The Novatians, it has before been mentioned, were frequent sharers in the sufferings of the orthodox.

laws which the Emperor Constantine had deemed necessary to enact against them, had probably no slight influence in inflaming the sectaries to this degree of violence; and he was induced by the persuasions of some wise and moderate men, to restore to the Donatists the privileges of which he had deprived them. But the flame of discord had been lighted, and it was not now to be easily extinguished. Donatus, surnamed the Great, and the other Bishops who had espoused his opinions, vehemently resisted the proffered terms of reconciliation, and the Circumcelliones pursued the course they had begun, of terror and bloodshed. The attempts made by the successor of Constantine to pacify these malcontents, proved equally abortive with those employed by his father; and an army was at length sent against them under Macarius, who, having defeated them in a general engagement, banished Donatus and the heads of the party, exercising against the rest the most dreadful severities of a military judicature. Some of the most celebrated of the fathers considered that they were performing an act of the highest piety, by writing against this sect; and it would have been well for the credit of the orthodox rulers of those times, had they left the cause to the pious zeal and learning of those excellent men. After all that was done by the victorious officer of Constans, and by the laws which were passed in subsequent years, it was to the powerful eloquence of Optatus * and Augustine that their defeat and suppression were chiefly owing. The former of these distinguished writers was Bishop of Milevum in Africa, and his work on the schism of the Donatists is elegantly and even powerfully written. According to this author, the persons whom they accused of delivering the Scriptures to the persecutors, were altogether innocent of that crime; and he boldly retorts the accusation upon the accusers. In answer to Parmenianus, a Donatist, to whom the work is addressed, and who had strongly reprehended the orthodox for the persecutions of which they had been guilty, observes, that the church had never persecuted them, and that they could name no member of the church that had done so. On the contrary, the Donatists, he says, had committed the most disgraceful excesses against the orthodox; had driven away Bishops from their churches, murdered Deacons while officiating at the altars, exercised cruelties of every kind against women and children, nor had even forborne to treat the most sacred things with despite. "Your Bishops," says he, "caused the eucharist to be thrown to the dogs; and presently the tokens of God's anger were seen; for the enraged animals turned upon their masters, and tore them as if they were thieves whom they knew not; the justice of God thus employing their teeth to revenge the sacrilege." With regard to the persecution commenced by Macarius, he observes, that that officer was obliged

* Optatus is recognised as a saint in the Romish calendar. He was Bishop of Milevum, a town of Numidia, and flourished under Valentinian and Valens. He wrote his very able and judicious treatise on the schism of the Donatists about the year 370, against Parmenian, Bishop of that sect. He is commended by Augustine, Jerome, and Fulgentius. There are several editions of his works: the last and best is that of Dupin, (1700,) who has settled the text from four MSS., and has given short notes, with various readings, at the bottom of the page; and at the end he has inserted the notes of Badoubin, Casaubon, Barthius, and others.

to employ rigorous measures to quell the sedition; and again asserts, that the church itself had no share in instigating such proceedings, which she neither desired to have pursued, nor was aware of when commenced. The Bishop, however, notwithstanding these repeated assertions respecting the innocence of the orthodox, renders his own opinions on the subject of persecution somewhat doubtful, by suggesting that the attack on the schismatics was authorized by the example of Moses, who put three thousand men to death for worshipping the golden calf; and, boldly contending that when our Saviour commanded the Apostle Peter to put up his sword, he only intended the command to be understood of that particular time and circumstance! Then, repeating the accusations he had already brought against them, he exclaims, "Ye have redoubled your sacrilege, in breaking the chalices which held the blood of Christ; ye have melted them down to make ingots of gold or silver, which ye have sold in the markets to every one indifferently who would buy them. Sacrilegious as ye are, ye have not even respected the chalices in which you have yourselves offered, and they have been bought, it is probable, by infamous women for their own use. Or the Pagans, perhaps, have taken them for vessels to be employed in the service of idols. O fearful crime! O unheard-of impiety!" *

The origin of the disgraceful excesses to which Optatus thus alludes, was the same as that of the opposition made by the Donatists to the election of the obnoxious Bishop. They argued that, as that individual had disgraced himself by apostacy, the altar would be defiled by his presence; and, when they had driven their opponents from the churches, they pretended, and many of them, deceived by a blind fanaticism, doubtless believed, that the vessels which had been used by these desecrated Priests, had suffered contamination from their touch, and ought no longer to be employed in the service of God. The absurdity of their ideas on these points is, of course, sufficiently evident; but there is every reason to believe that it was thus they justified their conduct, and that we are, therefore, to regard the accusations brought against them, of an unprovoked and flagitious sacrilege, with some degree of modification. But in the year 411, Augustine succeeded in persuading the chiefs of the Donatists to meet the representatives of the church in a conference at Carthage. The eloquence with which he there encountered the most accomplished of the party, and the strong and lucid arguments he opposed to the reasons on which they established their schism, convinced many of the least obstinate of their errors. Others, whom his arguments would not, perhaps, have sufficiently affected, were deeply moved by the mildness and charity with which he propounded his sentiments. He had agreed, at the opening of the debate, and had induced the other Bishops to join with him in the promise, that if they could not convict the Donatists of error, and prove their separation from the church unreasonable, they would resign their bishoprics into their hands, and be content to retire into the situation of private persons. All he said

* Sancti Optati, Milevi. Episc., Opera, fol. Lutet. Parisior., 1676.

was in conformity with this assurance. "If they speak injuriously of you," was his advice to the orthodox, "suffer it to be so, and answer not. Speak not to him who maltreats you, but speak much to God in his favour. Say meekly to him who attacks and injures you, 'Whatever you speak or do against me, I, notwithstanding, love you, because you are my brother.'" But the influence which Augustine exercised over the assembly by these means was not sufficient to prevent the debates from being continued with warmth three days; nor did he succeed in convincing the heads of the party that their schism was unlawful or unreasonable. The conviction, however, which his arguments failed to convey to the minds of the Donatists, rushed with full force upon the understandings of those who agreed with the eloquent orator; and when, at the conclusion of the conference, it was to be decided on which party lay the guilt of the schism, the Tribune Marcellinus, who presided at the meeting, passed a sentence against the Donatists, which doomed them to exile or apostacy. Crowds of them, it is said, purchased their safety by immediately assenting to the decree of the Tribune, or the persuasions of Augustine. Those who persevered in their opposition appealed to the Emperor; but he rejected their application, and not only confirmed the sentence of his Minister, but directed the revival of the laws which had been anciently in force against them. This had no other effect than that of confirming the most dangerous part of the sect in their fanaticism and licentiousness. The *Circumcelliones* continued their horrible violences with the fury of men inspired by despair, as well as the most deplorable superstition; and the orthodox, while thus exposed to the daggers of these wretched enthusiasts, everywhere rejoiced at the spectacle of hundreds of their less guilty opponents sinking under the infliction of ruinous fines, preparing for banishment, or perishing, as was often the case, by the hand of the public executioner.

It was at this period of the conflict, continues Dr. Stebbing, thus fiercely carried on between the two parties, that the Donatists began to exhibit instances of wilder enthusiasm and contempt of suffering than had as yet been displayed by any of the Christian sectaries. Despising the power which was sufficient to crush them, they resolved upon depriving their enemies of the glory of a triumph, and affected to rejoice that they were deemed worthy of undergoing death in vindication of their faith. To such a height of madness did this idea carry them, that when they might have escaped without difficulty, they voluntarily exposed themselves to their persecutors; and when those whom they thus dared pitied their fanaticism, and refused them the desired martyrdom, they either destroyed themselves, or, which was equivalent, placed their adversaries in a position which rendered forbearance impossible. The following is one of the anecdotes related of their conduct in this respect:—A party of the most impatient of these deluded beings, having sought in vain for some means of terminating their existence with honour, met, in the course of their wanderings, with a young man, a member of the orthodox church, whom they resolved to sacrifice to their hatred of his sect. Some of them, however,

conceived an idea, that this act of barbarity would be less becoming their zeal, than their suffering a similar piece of cruelty to be perpetrated on themselves. This notion was immediately embraced by the whole party, and they signified to the young man, that they would allow him to remain uninjured, if he would agree to put them to death. To this strange proposition the young churchman signified his assent; but he demanded, with great appearance of reason, that they should consent to be bound before he commenced the slaughter; for, unless they put themselves out of the power of injuring him, he argued, they would probably no sooner feel the smart of their wounds, than their agreement would be forgotten, and he made a victim of their still greater cruelty. There was so much fairness and plausibility in this request, that the Donatists readily consented to be bound hand and foot, and in that condition they awaited the stroke which was to place them among the worthiest of the saints. But, instead of affording them the expected gratification, the young man first broke the swords which they had placed in his hands, and then beat them as a punishment for their folly. The firm manner in which he had bound their hands and feet prevented them from resisting his blows; and they were afterwards left rolling in the road, to endure the abuse and mockery of whoever passed by. It was not, however, to such mad and ignorant enthusiasts as these appear to have been, that the custom of self-murder, the most remarkable characteristic, was confined. According to the usual accounts given of this people, those who pretended to offer any apology for their conduct, defended it by asserting, that they preferred dying to running the risk of being obliged to communicate in any manner with their adversaries. Others seem to have considered, that by destroying themselves when the pursuit was hot against them, they should terrify the orthodox from continuing the persecution, and by that means save their brethren and their faith. It was to this notion Augustine appears to have referred, when, in writing to Count Boniface on the subject of the numerous conversions that had occurred, he says, "When you see how many have been saved from perdition, by being delivered from this miserable schism, you will acknowledge that it would have been great cruelty to abandon so many persons to eternal damnation, and to the flames of hell, for fear that a band of desperadoes, so few in number compared with these, should voluntarily commit themselves to the flames which they had prepared for their own destruction." Among the works of this celebrated father, are two books addressed to Gaudentius,* the Donatist Bishop of a city in Numidia, and one of those who had been commissioned by the sect to defend their rights in the conference at Carthage. The history of the fate of the Bishop is very imperfect; but from the incidental notices of it in the epistles addressed to him

* Gaudentius was elected Bishop of Brescia about the end of the fourth century. He was sent in 405 to Constantinople, with the Legates of Pope Innocent, to re-establish Chrysostom in his see, and to hold a General Council. The time of his death is fixed by some at the year 410, and by others at 427. He wrote a life of his predecessor, Philaster, and letters, and other pieces, which are inserted in the fifth volume of the *Bibliotheca Patrum*; but the most complete edition of his works was published at Brescia, in 1738, by Paul Galeardi.

on the subject of his heresy, it appears, that having fled from his diocess, in order to avoid the fury of the persecution, he was soon after induced, from some compunctions of conscience, to return. He had no sooner re-established himself in his church than he made it known, that if any attempt were made to compel him to communicate with the orthodox, he would immediately set fire to his cathedral, and perish, with his faithful followers, under its ruins. The officer to whom the execution of the laws against the Donatists was intrusted was Dulcitius, a man whose disposition inclined him to tolerance, and who so far overstepped the usual maxims of his profession, as to write to Gaudentius, and persuade him, with great earnestness, to re-unite himself to the church, or at least not to commit the dreadful crime of destroying himself, and the unfortunate people that were with him. He next asked him how he could find it in his heart to resolve upon burning the beautiful edifice in which he had so often called upon the name of God; or how he could deem it consistent with reason to burn himself, if he believed that he was innocent, instead of seeking his safety in flight, as Jesus Christ had directed his disciples to do of old.

To this epistle Gaudentius instantly replied, that he was resolved, if any violence were employed against him, to finish his days in the camp of the Lord; but that as for those who were with him, he was so far from wishing to constrain them, that he had exhorted all who were under the influence of fear to depart and save themselves. The next day he wrote another letter, in which he defended his conduct more at length, and cited the example of Razis, whose death is recorded in the Second Book of Maccabees, in proof of the propriety of his proceedings. Dulcitius, unable to combat these arguments, sent both the epistles to Augustine, with an earnest request that he would answer them, and give him instructions as to the method it would be right to pursue with the heretics. The Prelate replied, that the fear of suffering some few miserable creatures to perish ought not to prevent his employing the most rigorous measures for the salvation of others. He afterwards wrote a formal answer to the arguments of the Donatist, who again defended himself as before; but history has left it doubtful whether he perished by his own hand, as he threatened, or consented to avoid the persecutions of his enemies by a voluntary exile. The former is not at all improbable, considering the disposition to suicide which prevailed so generally among the sect, and that it is known that several Bishops and others of the Clergy put themselves to a violent death. Mention is made by Augustine, in one of his epistles, of a presbyter named Donatus, who, in order to escape from his pursuers, leaped into a well, with the intention of destroying himself; but the persons who were following him coming up soon after, he was dragged out; and the father employs this instance of care and humanity on the part of the orthodox, to prove how sincere they were in their anxiety for the spiritual good of the heretics. Partial, indeed, as are the accounts of this famous controversy, and allowing that many of the assertions respecting the fury of the Donatists are somewhat exaggerated by the historians of the opposite side, there

appears to be every reason for believing that considerable forbearance was exercised towards them by the public authorities, and that they were guilty of excesses which could only have proceeded from men under the influence of the worst species of fanaticism. Optatus, whose work, it should be remembered, was addressed to one of the party, accuses it of being chiefly characterized by a spirit of untameable ferocity. "Those," he says, "who are seduced either by faction or subtlety to join the sect, whether they be men or women, are suddenly converted from sheep into wolves, from faithful into perfidious, from patient into mad, from pacific into litigious, from simple into artful, from modest into shameless, from gentle into fierce, from innocent into artificers of evil." The unmerciful means which they everywhere employed to resent the injuries they had suffered from the orthodox, tend greatly to prove the truth of these allegations. Never did the Christian church endure, perhaps, so many evils from the intrusion of a sectarian spirit as during the existence of the Donatist heresy; and, to add to the ignominy with which the memory of that people has been handed down to posterity, they are believed, and with good reason, to have shared in exciting one of the most sanguinary persecutions that was ever experienced by a Christian people, either in former or subsequent days. The province of Africa having fallen into the hands of the Vandals, Genseric their King, and after him Huneric his son, pursued the orthodox with a wanton barbarity which the Arians, Donatists, and other sectarians, appear to have employed every means to influence. One of the earliest laws of Huneric was, that no person should enjoy any public function who did not profess himself an Arian; and crowds were soon after sent into exile, or thrown into unhealthy prisons, in which they died of the fevers generated by the condition of their miserable cells. When a conference was proposed, but broken off by the Arians, the unfortunate Clergymen, who were to have advocated the cause of the orthodox, were severally condemned to receive a certain number of blows with a wand, and then to be sent into exile. Eugenius, the Bishop of Carthage, was one of those who were thus treated; and, in his banishment, he is said to have employed himself continually in writing letters to his flock, or in the performance of the most rigid acts of devotion, to obtain divine pardon for the sins to the commission of which he attributed the present calamity. But, if we may give credit to the earliest accounts of this persecution, exile was the mildest species of punishment employed by the Vandal Monarch and his Arian and Donatist advisers against the orthodox. The catalogue of sufferings recorded by the Bishop of Utica, in his narrative of these events, presents us with the same frightful spectacles as those described in the pagan persecutions, except that we may more than once discover the signs of that bitter hatred which is scarcely to be found but among warring sectarians. To prevent them saving themselves by flight, the persecutors exercised the same vigilance against the faithful as if they had been an invading army: not a fruit-tree, it is said, was allowed to remain where it was thought they might seek refuge; and every monastery and house of prayer which might have

given them shelter was burnt to the ground. Of those who were seized, the most venerable almost uniformly experienced the worst treatment, the fury of barbarous pursuers appearing to gather fresh nourishment from the dignity of those they tormented. Among the favourite methods of manifesting their rage was that of compelling their victims to drink sea-water, or other nauseous liquids, till they were on the point of suffocation,—a species of torture which, some centuries after, obtained great favour with the venerable Fathers of the Inquisition. At other times, they forced their prisoners to bear burdens which camels or horses would have almost found oppressive; and when these contrivances were deemed insufficient to punish their unfortunate adversaries, they applied sharp instruments to different parts of their bodies, in order to make them move under the load which they were wholly unable to support. These methods were pursued indiscriminately with young and old, and every feeling of nature was outraged and forgotten.* But we must not anticipate.

The unity no less than the external triumph of the church of Christ occupied the mind of Theodosius at this critical period. He had been anticipated in this project in the West by his imbecile predecessors and colleagues, Gratian and Valentinian the Younger. The laws began to speak the language of the exclusive establishment of Christianity, and of Christianity under one rigorous and unaccommodating creed and discipline. Almost the first act of Theodosius was an edict for the universal acceptance of the catholic faith. It appeared under the name, and with the conjoint authority, of the three Emperors, Gratian, Valentinian II., and Theodosius. It was addressed to the inhabitants of Constantinople. "We, the three Emperors, *will* that all our subjects follow the religion taught by the Apostle Peter to the Romans, professed by those saintly Prelates, Damasus, Pontiff of Rome, and Peter, Bishop of Alexandria; that we believe the one divinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, of majesty co-equal, in the Holy Trinity. We *will* that those who embrace this creed be called catholic Christians; we brand all the senseless followers of other religions by the infamous name of heretics, and forbid their conventicles to assume the name of churches; we reserve their punishment to the vengeance of heaven, and to such measures as divine inspiration shall dictate to us." Thus the religion of the whole Roman world was enacted by two feeble boys, and a rude Spanish soldier.† The next year witnessed the condemnation of all heretics, particularly the Photinians, Arians, and Eunomians, and the expulsion of the Arians from the churches of all the cities in the East, and their surrender to the only *lawful* form of Christianity.‡ On the assembling of the Council of Chalcedon, two severe

* Stebbing, History of the Christian Church, 12mo., vol. i., p. 212.

† Baronius, and even Godefroy, call this law a golden, pious, and wholesome statute. Happily it was on the right side. (Milman.)

‡ On the accession of Theodosius, according to Sozomen, the Arians possessed all the churches of the East except Jerusalem. (See Sozom., Hist. Eccles., lib. vii., cap. 2.)

laws were issued against apostates and Manichæns, prohibiting them from making wills. During its sitting, the Emperor promulgated an edict, prohibiting the Arians from building churches either in the cities or in the country, under pain of the confiscation of the funds devoted to the purpose.* The circumstances of the times coincided with the design of Theodosius to concentre the whole Christian world into one vigorous and consistent system. The more legitimate influence of argument and intellectual and religious superiority concurred with the stern mandates of the civil power. All the great and commanding minds of the age were on the same side, as to the momentous and strongly-agitated questions of the faith. The productive energies of Arianism seemed as it were exhausted: its great defenders had passed away, and left, apparently, no heirs to their virtues and abilities. It was distracted with schisms, and had to bear the unpopularity of the sects, which seemed to have sprung from it in the natural course, the Eunomians,† Macedonians,‡ and a still multiplying progeny of heresies. Everywhere the Trinitarian Prelates rose to ascendancy, not merely from the support of the government, but from their pre-eminent character or intellectual powers. Each province seemed to have produced some individual adapted to the particular period and circumstances of the time, who devoted himself to the establishment of the Athanasian opinions. They were master-spirits, capable of guiding the vessel in troublous seas. The intractable Egypt, more particularly turbulent Alexandria, was ruled by the strong arm of the bold, but unprincipled, Theophilus. The dreamy mysticism of Syria found a congenial representative in Ephrem. A

* Sozomen adverts to these severe laws, but asserts that they were enacted merely *in terrorem*, and with no design of carrying them into execution. (Hist. Eccles., lib. vii., cap. 12.)

† The Eunomians were a sect of the fourth century, a branch of Arianism, and took their name from Eunomius, Bishop of Cyzicus. Cave, in his Historia Literaria, vol. i., p. 223, gives an account of their faith, which shows how nearly their tenets approached Arianism. "There is one God, uncreated and without beginning, who has nothing existing before him, for nothing can exist before what is uncreated; nor with him, for what is uncreated must be one; nor in him, for God is a simple and uncompounded Being. This one simple and eternal Being is God, the Creator and Ordainer of all things; first, indeed, and principally, of his only-begotten Son, and then, through him, of all other things. For God begat, created, and made the Son only by his direct operation and power, before all things and every other creature; not producing, however, any being like himself, or imparting any of his own proper substance to the Son; for God is immortal, uniform, invisible, and therefore cannot communicate any part of his own proper substance to another. He alone is unbegotten, and it is impossible that any other being should be formed of an unbegotten substance. He did not use his own substance in begetting the Son, but his will only; nor did he beget him in the likeness of his substance, but according to his own good pleasure; he then created the Holy Spirit, the first and greatest of all spirits, by his own power, in deed and operation mediately, yet by the immediate power and operation of the Son. After the Holy Spirit, he created all other things, in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible, corporeal and incorporeal, mediately by himself, but by the power and operation of the Son," &c.

‡ Macedonians were the followers of Macedonius, Bishop of Constantinople, who, through the influence of the Eunomians, was deposed by the Council of Constantinople in 360, and sent into exile. He considered the Holy Ghost as a divine energy diffused throughout the universe, and not as a person distinct from the Father and the Son. The sect of the Macedonians was crushed before it had arrived at its full maturity, by the Council assembled by Theodosius in 381, at Constantinople.

more intellectual, yet still somewhat imaginative, Orientalism animates the writings of Basil; in a less degree, those of Gregory of Nazianzum; still less, those of Gregory of Nyssa. The more powerful and Grecian eloquence of Chrysostom swayed the popular mind in Constantinople. Jerome, a link, as it were, between the East and the West, transplanted the monastic spirit and opinions of Syria into Rome; and brought into the East much of the severer thought, and more prosaic reasoning, of the Latin world. But the greatest, the most permanently influential, of all the celebrated men of that day was Augustine, who united the intense passion of the African mind with the most comprehensive and systematic views, and intrepid dogmatism on the darkest subjects. United in one common cause, acting in their several quarters according to their peculiar temperaments and characters, these strong-minded and influential Ecclesiastics almost compelled the world into a temporary peace, until first Pelagianism, and afterwards Nestorianism, again unsettled the restless elements: the controversies, first concerning grace, free-will, and predestination, then on the incarnation and two natures of Christ, succeeded to the silenced and exhausted feud concerning the Trinity of Persons in the Godhead.*

Various abuses had shown themselves in these harsh and rugged days of Christianity, and there are others yet unnoticed, of which the earliest vestiges and indications may probably be discovered in the ante-Nicene church, or in the writings of its Fathers; but among these certainly idolatry is not one. The ancient Christians continued to shun, with a pious horror, which persecution exasperated, and which time, that great Physician, did not mitigate, every approach to that abomination; and while they truly considered it essentially and distinctively Pagan, the reluctance which they felt to bow before any image, was aggravated by the firm belief, that the images of the Pagans represented the implacable adversaries of man and God. So definite and so broad was the space which, in this point at least, separated the two religions, that it seemed impossible that either of them should overstep it, or that any compromise could ever be effected between principles so fundamentally hostile. Yet the contrary result took place; and a reconciliation, which in the commencement of the fourth century could not easily have been imagined, was virtually accomplished before its termination. The progress of this revolution may be easily traced. On the first establishment of their religion, it was natural that Christians should look back from a condition of unexpected security on the sufferings of their immediate predecessors with the most vivid sentiments of sympathy and admiration. They had beheld those sufferings, they had witnessed the constancy with which they were endured: the same terror had been suspended over themselves, and their own preservation they attributed, under the especial protection of divine Providence, to the perseverance of those who had perished. The gratitude and veneration thus fervently excited were loudly and passionately expressed; and the

* Milman, History of Christianity, vol. iii., p. 188.

honours which were due to the virtues of the departed were profusely bestowed on their names and their memory. Enthusiasm easily passed into superstition, and those who had sealed a Christian's faith by a martyr's death were exalted above the condition of men, and enthroned among superior beings. Superstition gave birth to credulity, and those who sat among the powers of heaven might sustain, by miraculous assistance, their votaries on earth; and credulity increased the food on which it fed, by encouraging the detested practice of forgery and imposture. Under these dangerous circumstances, it became the duty of the Fathers and the leading Ministers of the church to moderate the violence of popular feeling, and to restrain any tendency towards vicious excess. But, unhappily for the integrity of the orthodox faith, the instructers were themselves carried away by the current, or, we should rather say, united their exertions to swell and corrupt it. The people we may excuse and compassionate; but we blush when we discover the most distinguished writers of the fourth century, Athanasius, Eusebius the historian, Gregory Nazianzen, Chrysostom, Jerome, and Augustine, engaged in a shameful conspiracy against their religion, while they exaggerate the merit of the martyrs, assert or insinuate their immediate sanctification, and claim for them a sort of reverence which could not easily be distinguished from worship. In this age, and from this cause, arose the stupid veneration for bones and relics; it was inculcated and believed, that prayer was never so surely efficacious as when offered at the tomb of some saint or holy person; the number of such tombs was then multiplied; at all of them miracles, and prophecies, and prodigies, and visions were exhibited or recorded; and the spirit of the Gospel was forgotten in the practice of forbidden ceremonies, and the belief of impious fables. Such were the first unworthy advances which were made by Christianity, and encouraged by her leading Ministers, with a view to reconcile at least her external differences with Paganism.*

The death of Theodosius speedily followed his victory over Eugenius; four months only elapsed, and his demise was considered by the people as an unforeseen and a fatal event, that cast a shade over the hopes of a rising generation: the indulgence, however, of ease and luxury had cast, with a liberal hand, the seeds of disease and death. The strength of Theodosius was unable to support the sudden and violent transition from the palace to the camp, and the increasing symptoms of a dropsy announced the speedy dissolution of the Emperor. The opinion, and perhaps the interest, of the public had confirmed the division of the Eastern and Western empires; and the two royal youths, Arcadius and Honorius, who had already obtained, from the tenderness of their father, the title of Augustus, were destined to fill the thrones of Constantinople and of Rome. Those Princes were not permitted to share the danger and glory of the civil war; but as soon as Theodosius had triumphed over his unworthy rivals, he called his younger son, Honorius, to enjoy the fruits of the vic-

* Waddington, History of the Church, vol. i., p. 234.

tory, and to receive the sceptre of the West from the hands of his dying father. The arrival of Honorius at Milan was welcomed by a splendid exhibition of the games of the Circus, and the Emperor, though he was oppressed by the weight of his disorder, contributed by his presence to the public joy. But the remains of his strength were exhausted by the painful effort which he made to assist at the spectacles of the morning. Honorius supplied, during the rest of the day, the place of his father, and the great Theodosius expired in the ensuing night. Notwithstanding the recent animosities of a civil war, his death was universally lamented. The barbarians whom he had vanquished, and the churchmen by whom he had been subdued, celebrated, with loud and sincere applause, the qualities of the deceased Emperor which appeared the most valuable in their eyes. The Romans were terrified by the impending dangers of a feeble and divided administration; and every disgraceful moment of the unfortunate reigns of Arcadius and Honorius revived the memory of their irreparable loss. To adopt the language of the historian of Rome, we may observe that in the faithful picture of the virtues of Theodosius, his imperfections have not been dissembled; the acts of cruelty, and the habits of indolence, which tarnished the glory of one of the greatest of the Roman Princes. An historian,* perpetually adverse to the fame of Theodosius, has exaggerated his vices, and their pernicious effects: he boldly asserts, that every rank of subjects imitated the effeminate manners of their Sovereign; every species of corruption polluted the course of public and private life; and that the feeble restraints of order and decency were insufficient to resist the progress of that degenerate spirit which sacrifices without a blush the consideration of duty and interest to the base indulgence of sloth and appetite. The contemporary writers who deplore the increase of luxury and depravation of manners, are commonly expressive of their peculiar temper and situation. There are few observers who possess a clear and comprehensive view of the revolutions of society, and who are capable of discovering the nice and secret springs of action which impel, in the same uniform direction, the blind and capricious passions of a multitude of individuals. If it can be affirmed, with any degree of truth, that the luxury of the Romans was more shameless and dissolute in the age of Theodosius than in that of Constantine, perhaps, or of Augustus, the alteration cannot be ascribed to any beneficial improvements which had gradually increased the stock of national riches. A long period of calamity or decay must have checked the industry, and diminished the wealth, of the people; and their profuse luxury must have been the result of that indolent despair which enjoys the present hour, and declines the thoughts of futurity. The uncertain condition of their property discouraged the subjects of Theodosius from engaging in those useful and laborious undertakings which require an immediate expense, and promise a slow and distant advantage. The frequent examples of ruin and desolation tempted them not to spare the remains of a patrimony which might,

* Zosimi Historia, lib. iv., p. 244.

every hour, become the prey of the rapacious Goth. And the mad prodigality which prevails in the confusion of a shipwreck or a siege may serve to explain the progress of luxury amidst the misfortunes and terrors of a sinking nation. The poison spread, and the camps of the legions were fatally infected. The enervated soldiers abandoned their own and the public defence; and the pusillanimous indolence which generally prevailed may be considered as the immediate cause of the downfal of the empire.*

The resolution to exterminate idolatry was not carried so far by Honorius in the Western empire, as by his brother Arcadius in the East, inasmuch as the former directed that the temples, with their images and sacred utensils, should be protected from injury; yet he prohibited the use of them in oblations, or any other ceremonies. He was not only a steady opponent of certain heresies which had for a long time prevailed, but also of the Pelagian heresy, which in the beginning of the fifth century began to take root. Pelagius and Celestius were the founders of this sect, upon both of whom the credit of unimpeachable sanctity and virtue has been bestowed by Augustine, the most rigid and indomitable adversary of their theological sentiments. Pelagius was a native of Britain; and, according to tradition, he was educated in the monastery of Bangor Iscoed, in the county of Flint, in Wales, of which place he became a Monk, and afterwards an Abbot.† One of the earliest institutions for theological learning in this island was probably that at Llantwit-Major, or Llaniltut, so called from Iltutus, after he was set over it by Garmon. At that place, called Caer Worgan, the Emperor Theodosius is said to have established a seminary of learning in the preceding century, soon after the defeat of Maximus, or about A.D. 388. At such a place Pelagius may have received the rudiments of his education. This person's British name was Morgan, or perhaps Morien, which, as it signifies "maritime," or "bordering on the sea," may have been easily Latinized into Pelagius. The county of Morgannwg, or Glamorgan, was so called on account of its maritime situation; although, according to others, it received its name from one Morgan, a Prince of that country. This celebrated character was in all probability a native of that part of Wales, from whence the name has become very common in all the adjoining counties, but is scarcely known in North Wales. That country has produced some eminent characters of comparatively recent date of similar endowments with Pelagius, who was admired for his learning and unblemished deportment; and noted as being a

* Gibbon, Decline and Fall, vol. ii., p. 559, Milman's notes, second edit., London, 1846.

† It is generally agreed upon by authors of antiquity, that he was a Briton; but as to the affirmation of certain writers of a more modern date, respecting his being one of the Monks of Bangor, (meaning Bangor Iscoed in Maelor,) there is a mistake which is easily detected. The monastic institution being hardly yet introduced into Britain, he could not have been a member of any monastery; although in the progress of this century many of those institutions, known among Britons by the name of "Bangors," were either founded or newly regulated. But Bangor in Maelor, on the river Dee, or, as it was afterward called, "Bangor Dunod," from the Prince who founded it, was not known until the ensuing century. (Hughes, Horæ Britannicæ, vol. i., p. 86.)

man of subtle and metaphysical genius, even while he was condemned on account of error. He, and many besides him, who secluded themselves from the bustle of the world, from a desire to addict themselves to study, were called Monks. Such were Basil and Chrysostom, whom friendship, piety, and learning knit together in the strictest bonds of fraternity. Chrysostom was compelled to quit his solitude to undertake the pastoral charge; the important and arduous duties of which he has so ably depicted in his excellent treatise on the Christian priesthood.*

At what time Pelagius left the land of his nativity, it is not easy to ascertain; but it must have been some time previous to the close of the fourth century. He then resided for some time at Rome, where he was greatly respected, previous to his being charged with maintaining erroneous doctrines; and afterwards, when associated with Celestius,† he privately propagated his obnoxious sentiments. The rise of the Pelagian heresy, according to Bede, was in the year 394; but, according to both Vossius and Ussher, not until 405. The latter date will, perhaps, best apply to the time when Pelagius was generally known to avow the sentiments which he had for some time secretly entertained, and which had been previously propagated by Ruffinus. Pelagius was the author of certain works well received even by those persons who afterwards opposed him. He was honoured by the correspondence of Augustine; and when the celebrated John Chrysostom heard of his falling into erroneous tenets, he greatly lamented him. In his letter to Olympias, which was written in his state of exile in Armenia, A.D. 405, he thus expresses himself:—"My grief is great on account of Pelagius the Monk: think, of how many crowns are they worthy who stand undaunted,

* Horæ Britannicæ; or, Studies in ancient British History, containing various Disquisitions on the National and Religious Antiquities of Great Britain. By John Hughes, in 2 vols., 8vo., London, 1819, vol. i., p. 88.

† As a proof that education had made considerable progress in Ireland, we are distinctly informed by Jerome and others that the celebrated Celestius, so well known afterwards as the bold follower of Pelagius, the arch-heretic, was by birth an Irishman; and three letters to his parents are still extant which demonstrate that he had received an early Christian education in that country. The epistles not only imply that his parents were Christians, but that there must have existed an extensive community of them in a country where such a writer could have been instructed, and such letters at all understood. They were written, says Moore in his History of Ireland, in the form, as we are told, of little books, and full of such piety as to make them necessary to all who love God. Their date is A.D. 369, and they were written, I need scarcely remark, previously to the falling of Celestius into his grievous errors, and sixty-two years before the arrival of Patrick; but they evidently imply a full reception of Christianity into Ireland at a much earlier period. The ablest opponent, perhaps, to be found to the arrogant and presumptuous heresy of Pelagius, was the countryman and contemporary of Celestius, the celebrated Sedulius. As a Missionary he travelled through France, Italy, Asia, and Achaia. He wrote several works in prose and verse; among the former, a comment on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle, entitled, "Seduliis Scoti Hibernensis in omnes Epistolas Pauli Collectaneum." How profoundly skilled Sedulius was in the leading doctrines of the Gospel, may be inferred from the clearness, conciseness, and appositeness of his remarks, critically comparing Scripture with itself, according to the analogy of faith. He was indeed an honour to his country, and a bright luminary in the orthodox church of his age. The country that produced such scholars as Celestius and Sedulius, at that early period, must have arrived at a high state of mental civilization. (Dean Murray, Ireland and her Church, 4to., p. 10, second edit., London, 1845.)

when we see men who have lived with so much piety and strictness drawn away." It would therefore appear, that he did not bring his errors with him from Britain, whatever there might have been in his way of thinking, which might dispose him the more readily to imbibe the opinions which he afterwards propagated.

Celestius subsequently became the principal coadjutor of Pelagius, and Jerome unhesitatingly recognised him as the Cerberus of Pelagius. He became acquainted also with one Julian of Campania, who made himself very active in disseminating his heterodox principles. "But it was not into one city," says Jerome, "that he introduced those blasphemous opinions; but to the utmost of his ability he spread them through the world." Celestius was also a man of a more bold and forward turn than Pelagius:* the latter made use of him as his agent and right-hand man. It is said that at first he only proposed his doubts respecting certain points of doctrine generally received, as if he wished to be more fully satisfied respecting original sin, and the necessity of divine grace. But after a while he was no longer able to disguise his sentiments, and then he met with vehement opposition from all quarters. "These persons," says Mosheim, "looked upon the doctrines which were commonly received concerning the corruption of human nature, and the necessity of divine grace to enlighten the understanding and purify the heart, as prejudicial to the progress of holiness, of virtue, and tending to lull mankind in a presumptuous and fatal security. They maintained that these doctrines were false, as they were pernicious; that the sins of our first parents were imputed to them alone, and not to their posterity; that we derive no corruption from their fall, but are born as pure and unspotted as Adam came out of the forming hand of his Creator; that mankind, therefore, are capable of repentance and amendment, and of arriving at the highest degrees of piety and virtue, by the use of their natural faculties and powers; that, indeed, external grace is necessary to excite their endeavours, but that they have no need of the internal succours of the divine Spirit." This controversy was referred by Celestius and Pelagius to the decision of Zosimus, who was raised to the Pontificate, A.D. 417. The new Pontiff, gained over by the ambiguous and seemingly-orthodox confession of faith that Celestius had artfully drawn up, and also by the letters and protestations of Pelagius, pronounced in favour of these Monks, declared them sound in the faith, and unjustly persecuted by their adversaries. The African Bishops, with Augustine at their head, little affected with this declaration, continued obstinately to maintain the judgment they had pronounced, and to strengthen it by their exhort-

* The Pelagians maintained the following doctrines:—1. That Adam was by nature mortal; and, whether he had sinned or not, would certainly have died. 2. That the consequences of Adam's sin were confined to his own person. 3. That new-born infants are in the same situation with Adam before the fall. 4. That the law qualified men for the kingdom of heaven, and was founded upon equal promises with the Gospel. 5. That the general resurrection of the dead does not follow in virtue of our Saviour's resurrection. 6. That the grace of God is given according to our merits. 7. That this grace is not granted for the performance of every moral act; the liberty of the will and information in points of duty being sufficient.

ations, their letters, and their writings. Zosimus yielded to the perseverance of the Africans, changed his mind, and condemned, with the utmost severity, Pelagius and Celestius, whom he had honoured with his approbation, and covered with his protection. This was followed by a train of evils, which pursued these two Monks without interruption. They were condemned by that Ephesian Council which launched its thunder at the head of Nestorius. In short, the Gauls, Britons, and Africans, by their Councils and Emperors, by their edicts and penal laws, demolished this sect in its infancy, and suppressed it entirely before it had acquired any tolerable degree of vigour or consistence.

The almost-interminable disputes to which the Pelagian controversy gave rise, were instrumental in producing another variety of sectarians; who, from their aim to avoid the extremes of the contending parties of the day, mingled the heresies of the one with the orthodox principles of the other, on which account they were called "Semi-Pelagians."* They maintained the power of free will to produce goodness, faith, and newness of life; but that man could not persevere onwards to the attainment of that degree of holiness which should complete his own salvation without the grace of the Saviour. They denied that there was any peculiar or special dispensation of his grace through predestination; but held that all were capable of receiving its efficacy, or resisting it. It is likewise declared, that they held opinions concerning the predestination of infants, to which strong objections were raised. This sect sprang up in the South of France about the year 428, and was upheld by many persons of learning, the chief of whom was Cassian, a pupil of Chrysostom, and Honoratius, Bishop of Marseilles. On the other hand, it was resisted by Hormisdas and Felix III., Bishops of Rome; by Hilarius of Arles, Prosper of Aquitaine, and others, who faithfully followed the doctrines of Augustine in their endeavours to interrupt its progress, and to neutralize its effects. Another heresy, in this fatally-misguided period, which added to the uneasiness and peril of the church, pertained to the doctrine of the incarnation, and other abstruse points relating to the union of the Word with the human offspring of Mary.† It arose from Nestorius

* "Semi-Pelagians" was a name anciently, and is even at this day, given to such as retain some tincture of Pelagianism. Cassian, who had been a Deacon of Constantinople, and was afterwards a Priest of Marseilles, was the chief of these Semi-Pelagians, whose leading principles were, 1. That God did not dispense his grace to one more than another in consequence of predestination; that is, an eternal and absolute decree; but was willing to save all men, if they complied with the terms of his Gospel. 2. That Christ died for all men. 3. That the grace purchased by Christ, and necessary to salvation, was offered to all men. 4. That man before he received grace was capable of faith and holy desires. 5. That man was born free, and consequently capable of resisting the influences of grace, or of complying with its suggestions. The Semi-Pelagians were very numerous; and the doctrine of Cassian, though variously explained, was received in the greatest part of the monastic schools in Gaul, from whence it spread itself far and wide, through the European provinces. As to the Greeks, and other Eastern Christians, they had embraced the Semi-Pelagian doctrines before Cassian. In the sixth century the controversy between the Semi-Pelagians and the disciples of Augustine prevailed much, and continued to divide the Western churches.

† They believed that in Christ there were not only two natures, but two persons, of which the one was *divine*, even the eternal Word; and the other, which was *human*, was the man Jesus; that these two Persons had only one aspect; that the union between the

refusing to apply the term Θεοτόκος, "Mother of God," to "Mary, the mother of Christ." Nestorius substituted the word Χριστοτόκος. This led, of course, to a violent controversy; and from the rank and character of the Divines who had embarked in the dispute, it became impossible to bring the dispute to an end without the decision of a Council. As the settlement of this question was therefore the principal reason for calling together a General Council at Ephesus, we shall, in the mean time, advert to a few further particulars, tending to show the circumstances by which this intestine broil was rendered of signal importance. Nestorius was a Syrian, born in Germanicia, a Monk of Euprepias, near Antioch, of the church in which city he had formerly been a Presbyter; was elected to the episcopate of Constantinople upon the death of Sisinius, in 428. He was very violent in his censures against heretics, and immediately after his consecration he addressed the Emperor: "Give me, O Cæsar, give me the earth purged of heretics, and I will give you in exchange the kingdom of heaven! Exterminate with me the heretics, and with you I will exterminate the Persians!" He violently attacked a secret conventicle of Arians, by setting fire to it; and the flames spreading did much damage to the city, on which account he was named the "Incendiary." He also persecuted the Quartodecimans in Lydia, Caria, and in other parts. Soon after his elevation to the high metropolitan dignity, he permitted Anastasius, his Priest, and Dorothæus, a Bishop, to preach the doctrine above-mentioned, which he himself also maintained. Proclus, Bishop of Cyzicum, opposed it; and at length the Clergy, Monks, and people combined against the new heresy. Cyril of Alexandria also resolutely impugned it; affirming, in opposition, the principles laid down in the Nicene Creed, and adding twelve tremendous anathemas. Against these Nestorius promulgated as many. A long correspondence took place between Cyril, Celestine, Nestorius, and the Eastern and Western Bishops, all without the effect of bringing Nestorius to confess his error.* At last both parties, Nestorius as well as the orthodox, applied to the Emperor to summon a General Council, which he did; and deputed Candidian to watch the proceedings, not for the purpose of interfering with the controversialists, but to prevent disturbance from the

Son of God and the Son of man was formed in the moment of the virgin's conception, and was never to be dissolved; that it was not, however, an union of nature, or of person, but only of will and affection; that Christ was therefore to be carefully distinguished from God, who dwelt in him as in his temple; and that Mary was to be called "the mother of Christ," and not "the mother of God." One of the chief supporters of the Nestorian cause was Barsumas, created Bishop of Nisibis, A.D. 435. Such was his zeal and success, that the Nestorians who still remain in Chaldea, Persia, and Assyria, and the adjacent countries, consider him alone as their parent and founder. By him Phreozes, the Persian Monarch, was persuaded to expel those Christians who adopted the opinions of the Greeks, and to admit the Nestorians in their place, putting them in possession of the principal seat of ecclesiastical authority in Persia, the see of Seleucia, which the Patriarch of the Nestorians has always filled, even down to our time. Barsumas also erected a school at Nisibis, from which proceeded those Nestorian Doctors who, in the fifth and sixth centuries, spread abroad their tenets through Egypt, Syria, Arabia, India, Tartary, and China. (See Account of the Nestorian Christians, by Asahel Grant.)

* Townsend, Eccles. and Civil Hist. considered, vol. i., p. 369.

Monks and others who had assembled in great numbers. In subsequent periods of the history of this sect, we find they were sometimes called Chaldeans, and extended their spiritual conquests beyond Mount Imaus, and introduced the Christian religion into Tartary, properly so called, and especially into that country called Karit, bordering on the northern part of China. The Prince of that region, whom the Nestorians converted to the Christian faith, assumed, according to the vulgar tradition, the name of John after his baptism, to which he added the surname of "Presbyter," from a principle of modesty; whence, it is said, his successors were each of them called "Prester John" until the time of Gingis Khan. But Mosheim observes, that the famous Prester John did not begin to reign in that part of Asia before the conclusion of the eleventh century. The Nestorians formed so considerable a body of Christians, that the Missionaries of Rome were industrious in their endeavours to reduce them under the Papal yoke. Innocent IV. and Nicholas IV. used their utmost efforts for this purpose, but without success. Till the time of Pope Julius III., the Nestorians acknowledged but one Patriarch, who resided first at Bagdad, and afterwards at Mousul; but a division arising among them, in 1551 the patriarchate became divided, at least for a time, and a new Patriarch was consecrated by that Pope, whose successors fixed their residence in the city of Ormus, in the mountainous parts of Persia, where they still continue, distinguished by the name of Simeon; and so far down as the seventeenth century, these Patriarchs persevered in their communion with the Church of Rome, but seem at present to have withdrawn themselves from it. The great Nestorian Pontiffs, who form the opposite party, and look with a hostile eye on this little Patriarch, have, since the year 1559, been distinguished by the general denomination of Elias, and reside constantly in the city of Mousul. Their spiritual dominion is very extensive, takes in a greater part of Asia, and comprehends also within its circuit the Arabian Nestorians, and also the Christians of St. Thomas, who dwell along the coast of Malabar. It is observed, to the lasting honour of the Nestorians, that of all the Christian societies established in the East, they have been the most careful and successful in avoiding a multitude of superstitious opinions and practices that have infested the Greek and Latin churches. About the middle of the seventeenth century, the Romish Missionaries gained over to their communion a small number of Nestorians, whom they formed into a congregation or church; the Patriarchs or Bishops of which reside in the city of Amida, or Diarbekir, and all assume the denomination of Joseph. Nevertheless the Nestorians in general persevere to our own times in their refusal to enter into the communion of the Romish Church, notwithstanding the earnest entreaties and alluring offers that have been made by the Pope's Legate to conquer their inflexible constancy.*

Augustine was confessedly the most celebrated among the ancient Christian Fathers; but the notice of him in this work must necessarily be brief. He was born in Numidia, in the year 354, and his

* Henderson, Theolog. Dict. *in loco*.

early youth was distinguished by his aversion to all study, and especially that of the Greek language. From profane he directed his attention to religious subjects; and when we recollect that Tertullian, the greatest among his African predecessors, seceded from the church in the maturity of his judgment and learning, in order to embrace the visions of a raving fanatic, we are scarcely astonished to learn that the youthful imagination of Augustine was seduced by the Manichæan opinions. He appears to have retained them for nine or ten years, during which time his rhetorical talents had raised him into notice, and it was not until the year 386 that he was persuaded, as it is said, by the sermons of Ambrose, and the writings of the Apostle Paul, to return to the communion of the church. His baptism speedily followed his conversion; his ordination took place soon afterwards, and the city of Hippo in Africa, which owes most of its celebrity to its association with his name, was that in which he first ministered as a Priest, and afterwards presided as Bishop. He died in 430, in the thirty-fifth year of his episcopate. The first recorded exploit of his ecclesiastical life was the destruction of an inveterate and a consecrated abuse. The origin of the *Agapæ*,* or "feasts of charity," and the purposes to which in early times they contributed, were innocent and praiseworthy. But as the influx of the pagan converts grew more rapid, and as these naturally sought in the new religion for any resemblance to the popular ceremonies of the old, the solemnity in question insensibly changed its character under their influence, and degenerated into the licence and debauchery of a heathen festival. Augustine, while yet a Presbyter, undertook the difficult task of persuading the people to abandon a favourite and hereditary practice, and by the simple exertion of his eloquence he succeeded. Services of reading and chanting were substituted in its place; and while the churches of the heretics resounded with the customary revelry,

* *Agapæ*, or "love-feasts," "feasts of charity," among the ancient Christians, when liberal contributions were made by the rich to the poor. It has been supposed by many that the custom is sanctioned by 1 Cor. xi. 20, 21; but the following verse clearly shows that the Apostle reprobates the idea of the Corinthian Christians eating any other social meal in public but that of the Lord's supper. Chrysostom gives the following account of this feast, which he derives from the apostolic practice. He says, "The first Christians had all things in common, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles; but when that equality of possessions ceased, as it did even in the Apostles' time, the *Agape* or 'love-feast' was substituted in the room of it. Upon certain days, after partaking of the Lord's supper, they met at a common feast, the rich bringing provisions, and the poor, who had nothing, being invited." It was always attended with receiving the holy sacrament: but there is some difference between the ancient and modern interpreters, as to the circumstance of time; namely, whether this feast was held before or after the communion. Chrysostom is of the latter opinion; the learned Dr. Cave of the former. These love-feasts, during the first three centuries, were held in the church without scandal or offence; but in after-times the Heathens began to tax them with impurity. This gave occasion to a reformation of these *Agapæ*. The kiss of charity with which the ceremony used to end, was no longer given between different sexes; and it was expressly forbidden to have any beds or couches for the conveniency of those who should be disposed to eat more at their ease. Notwithstanding these precautions, the abuses committed in them became so notorious, that the holding them (in churches at least) was solemnly condemned at the Council of Carthage, in the year 397. Attempts have been made, of late years, to revive these feasts. They are, however, not very general, being confined almost entirely to the Sandemanians, and some of the stricter Antipædobaptists. This primitive practice, though under a simpler form, and more expressly religious, is retained in modern times only by the Moravians and by the Wesleyan Methodists.

the voice of devotion alone proceeded from the assemblies of the orthodox. This change took place in the year 395; and from that moment the reputation of Augustine spread rapidly throughout the African church; and thence, as his labours proceeded, was diffused with no less of splendour to the most distant parts of Christendom. Besides the faithful discharge of his episcopal and his private duties, the Bishop of Hippo engaged deeply in the controversies of the day; and his attacks are chiefly against the Manichæans, the Donatists, and the Pelagians. His familiarity with the errors of the first may have qualified him more effectually to confute them; but it is at the same time curious to observe the motives which he advanced for his own adhesion to the orthodox church. They are the following: The consent of the people; the authority which began in the faith of miracles, which was nourished by hope, augmented by charity, confirmed by antiquity; the succession in the chair of the Apostle Peter; and the name of "Catholic" so established, that if a stranger should ask "*Where* is the catholic church?" no heretic would certainly dare to claim that title for his own communion.* These arguments, and such as these, have been so commonly reported in later ages, that, without at all entering (for such is not our province) into the question of their real value, we are contented to record their high antiquity, and the sanction which they received from the name of Augustine. His exertions against the Donatists have attached to the character of that Father the stain of persecution. The maxim, says Mosheim,† which justified the chastisement of religious errors by civil penalties, was confirmed and established by the authority of Augustine, and thus transmitted to following ages. He cannot be vindicated from that charge;‡ he unquestionably maintained the general principle, that the unity of the church should be preserved by secular interference, and that its adversaries should be crushed by the material sword. But his natural humanity in some degree counteracted the barbarity of his ecclesiastical principles; and there is still extant an epistle addressed by him to Marcellinus, (in 412,) in which he earnestly entreated that Magistrate to extend mercy to certain Donatists, who had been convicted of some sanguinary excesses against the orthodox. But his misfortune was, that, while his private philanthropy preserved the lives perhaps of a few individuals, the efficacy which he added to the worst maxim of church polity not only sharpened the shafts of injustice in his own time, but tempered them for long and fatal service in after-ages.§

The interests of the Macedonians at Constantinople were materially affected by their possessing no Bishop; for ever since they had been

* No heretic was so likely to have laid that claim as a Donatist; yet even a Donatist, while he maintained that the true catholic spirit and purity was alone perpetuated and inherent in his own communion, would scarcely have affirmed, that was, *bonâ fide*, the universal church, which did not extend beyond the shores of Africa, and which had not the majority even there. (Waddington.)

† Mosheim, Institutes of Eccles. History.

‡ Besides the epistle to Dulcitius, see his letter, or rather tract, to Boniface, "De Correctione Donatistarum;" and that to Vincentius. The principle is avowed and defended in both, at least provided the *animus* be to correct, not to revenge!

§ Waddington, A History of the Church, vol. i., chap. xi., p. 331.

deprived of their churches by Eudoxius, under the reign of Constantius, they had been governed only by Presbyters. The Novatians, on the other hand, although they had been agitated by the controversy concerning the Passover, which had been renewed by Sabbatius, had been allowed to remain in quiet possession of most of their churches, and had not been molested by any of the laws enacted against other heretics, because they maintained that the three Persons of the Trinity are of the same substance. The virtue of their Bishops also tended greatly to the maintenance of union and concord among them. After the death of Agelius, they were governed by Marcion, a Bishop of eminent piety; and on his decease, the bishopric devolved upon Sisinius, a very eloquent man, well versed in the doctrines of philosophy and of Scripture; and so expert in disputation, that even Eunomius, who made a practice of discussing controverted topics, often refused to hold disputes with him. His course of life was exemplary, and above the reach of calumny; yet he indulged in luxury, and even in superfluities; so that those who knew him not were incredulous as to whether he could remain temperate in the midst of so much abundance. He possessed so much kindness of disposition, and suavity of manner, that he was highly esteemed by the Bishops of the orthodox church, by the rulers, and by the learned. His jests were replete with good nature, and he could bear ridicule without manifesting the least resentment: he was very prompt and witty in his rejoinders. Being once asked wherefore, as he was a Bishop, he bathed twice daily; he replied, "Because I do not bathe thrice." On another occasion, being ridiculed by a member of the orthodox church because he dressed in white, he asked where it was commanded that he should dress in black; and as the other hesitated for a reply, he continued, "You can give no argument in support of your position; but I refer you to Solomon, the wisest of men, who says, 'Let your garments be always white;' moreover, Christ is described in the Gospel as having appeared in white; and Moses and Elias manifested themselves to the Apostles in robes of white." It appears to me, says Sozomen, that the following reply was also very ingenious. Leontius, Bishop of Ancyra, in Galatia, repaired to Constantinople, after he had deprived the Novatians in his province of their churches. Sisinius went to him to request that the churches might be restored; but far from yielding compliance, he reviled the Novatians, and said that they were not worthy of holding assemblies, because, by abolishing the observance of penance, they intercepted the mercy of God. To this Sisinius replied, "No one does penance as I do." Leontius asked him in what way he did penance. "In coming to see you," retorted Sisinius. Many other witty speeches are attributed to him, and he is even said to have written several works with some elegance. But his discourses obtained greater applause than his writings; for the intonation of his voice, the expression of his countenance, and all his attitudes produced extraordinary effects upon his audience. This brief description may serve to convey some idea of the disposition and mode of life of Sisinius;* but in this day

* Sozom., Hist. Eccles., lib. viii., cap. 1.

of rebuke and blasphemy, these puerile jests and miserable attempts at jocosity ill become a Prelate of the early church.

John, surnamed from his eloquence, Chrysostom, that is, "the golden-mouthed," was a native of Antioch, of a noble and opulent family. In the year 374, while he was still young, he had acquired such distinction, that the neighbouring Prelates elected him to a vacant see; but it is generally affirmed, that he refused that dignity, and fled to an adjacent mountain, where he passed four years in the society of an ancient solitary; thence he changed his residence to a frightful cavern, which witnessed, for the two following years, his rigid austerities. Having completed this preparatory discipline, he entered upon the offices of the ministry; and after edifying his native city for eighteen years by the most animating instructions, he was at once exalted, without solicitation, and even against his professed wish, to the see of Constantinople. Chrysostom carried with him to that dangerous eminence, not only the fervour of Christian eloquence, but the severity of monastic virtue; and he thought it little to move the affections and raise the admiration of his audience, unless he could reach their practice, and quell their vices. Had he confined his exhortations to the mass of the people, he would have produced less effect, perhaps, but he would have excited no odium; but the intrepid and earnest orator rose, in his vehement denunciations, from the people to the Clergy, and from the Clergy to the court, without excepting even the Empress herself from his reproaches.* To the keenness of his censures he added the weight of ecclesiastical jurisdiction; and both were zealously employed against episcopal licentiousness,† no less than against the vices and scandals imputed to the priesthood, and especially to the monastic orders. According to the most credible accounts, the state of religion in that diocess was far from being such as a man of Chrysostom's piety and severe character would desire. From the commencement of his episcopal labours, therefore, he found himself obliged to oppose many of the most influential of his Clergy, and to set an example of self-denial and austerity of living little agreeable to men who had been accustomed to enjoy, with hardly any restraint, the luxuries of the imperial capital. In the arrangement of his own household, he was so economical, that he was able to found a variety of hospitals, and comfort numerous poor persons, with the sums which he saved out of the usual expenditure of his revenues. This excellent union of economy and charity, together with the most assiduous attention to the duties of prayer and preaching, rendered him an object of warm admiration to the people. But in proportion to the increase of his popularity, those who suffered by the reform he was anxious to introduce, became more and more desirous of effecting his ruin; and on the arrival of Theophilus,

* Eudoxia, after failing in her first attempt to displace Chrysostom, renewed her hostilities; and it was then that the Bishop delivered the sermon (if, indeed, he did at all deliver it) beginning with the celebrated words:—"Herodias is again furious; Herodias again dances; she once again requires the head of John." An insolent allusion, says Gibbon, which, as a woman and a Sovereign, it was equally impossible for her to forgive.

† In his visitation through the Asiatic provinces, he deposed thirteen Bishops of Lydia and Phrygia, and passed a very severe censure upon the whole order.

Bishop of Alexandria, his declared and inveterate enemy, at Constantinople, a strong party was instantly formed, determined to carry their wishes into execution.* In order to accomplish this, Theophilus held a Council in the neighbourhood of Chalcedon, whither he was attended by thirty-six Bishops, and there prepared to decide the fate of Chrysostom by one of the most outrageous violations of the episcopal dignity that was ever committed by one member of that order towards another. The intended victim of these machinations was not ignorant of what was plotting against him; but he was destitute of the means necessary to resist so powerful a party. The Empress Eudoxia also, a woman of violent temper, had been for some time desirous of avenging herself for an affront which she was supposed to have received in one of his sermons; and she consequently forwarded the intentions of his enemies with all the influence she possessed. Thus menaced, Chrysostom had no resource but his piety and fortitude; and on these he depended without shrinking. "A terrible storm," said he, in one of his sermons preached at this time, "is approaching; but we have no fear of sinking, for we are founded on a rock: what, in fact, can I have to dread? Death? Jesus Christ is my life, and death is my gain! Exile? The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof! Confiscation? We brought nothing into the world, and we can carry nothing out!" To the summons which was sent him to appear before the Council, he replied that he would with great willingness attend, provided his known enemies were not allowed to preside as Judges. To Theophilus himself he objected, because he was heard to say, as he came out of Alexandria, "I am going to depose John." He urged the same reason against three other Bishops, and intimated his resolution not to appear before the Synod till these persons were ejected from the tribunal. No attention, however, was paid to his protests; and, after summoning him three times without avail, the assembly proceeded with the measures on which it had previously resolved. Chrysostom was, accordingly, deposed in form; and a letter being sent to the Emperor Arcadius, a weak and ignorant Monarch, containing an account of the trial, the Bishop was forthwith expelled his church. This was not effected without considerable difficulty. For three days the populace surrounded the cathedral into which he was known to have retired, and from which they were resolved no force should drag him. What would have been the result of a conflict between his numerous partisans and the officers of the Emperor, it is not easy to decide; but, to avoid the tumult and bloodshed which must have been the consequence of such a struggle, he resigned himself into the hands of the persons employed to take him, and was carried to a small town in Bithynia.

His departure was no sooner discovered by the multitude, than their previous murmurs rose into loud and wrathful expressions of vengeance against his persecutors. The next day the tumult was still

* Socrates, Hist., lib. vi., cap. 9, where it appears, that one of the earliest causes of the enmity of Theophilus, was the reception which Chrysostom gave to some Ecclesiastics deposed by that Patriarch.

unsubdued: troops of people besieged the Emperor's palace with prayers for the restoration of their beloved Bishop; others poured out execrations on the name of Eudoxia, who, it was believed, had taken the principal part in the obnoxious proceedings. The most lively alarm was thus excited among the courtiers: all apprehended the terrors of a general insurrection; and Constantinople presented, from one end to the other, a scene of mingled fury and dismay. To add to the confusion, at the moment when the rage of the one and the anxiety of the other party were at their height, the motions of an earthquake were felt, and a thousand voices were instantly heard, exclaiming, that it was a token of divine anger at the persecution of the holy Chrysostom. Eudoxia herself, it is said, trembled at the ominous coincidence, and now besought the Emperor to recall the Bishop with as much earnestness as she had before solicited his condemnation. Arcadius was himself too much alarmed to deny her request; and messengers were immediately despatched to bring Chrysostom back to Constantinople.

His return was hailed and commemorated by the people with every demonstration of enthusiasm; but he had not long resumed the exercise of his functions, when the Empress, by desiring her statue to be placed in the neighbourhood of the church, again led him to commit some offence against her pride.* Theophilus lost no time in availing himself of this circumstance: a new cabal was formed, and Chrysostom was again ordered into exile. He was, as before, obliged to employ a stratagem to escape the watchful affection of his people; but his departure was this time attended with more fatal consequences than on the previous occasion. Deprived of their Pastor, the numerous congregations which had assembled in the cathedral to celebrate a festival, left the church, attended by some Priests, and proceeded to the baths of Constantine, where they intended to complete their devotions, and baptize some catechumens who were waiting to receive that sacrament. But scarcely had they reached the baths, when they were assailed by a body of five hundred soldiers, sent to disperse them; violences of every description were committed by their barbarous pursuers; the females were outraged, the Priests severely wounded, and many of the worshippers seized and forced away to prison. Unfortunately, on the very day of Chrysostom's departure, the cathedral took fire; and it being at once suspected that his followers were guilty of planning its destruction, they were pursued and punished with redoubled cruelty. A Priest and a Reader were submitted to the most dreadful tortures to force from them a confession of the crime; but persisting in the assertion of their innocence, the one was kept on the rack till he expired, and the other, having had sufficient strength to endure his agonies, was sent to die in exile.

Chrysostom himself was treated without any regard either to his station, or the infirmities of his constitution. The officer and soldiers to whose custody he had been committed, compelled him to travel day and night without cessation, till they arrived at Cæsarea, in Cap-

* Socrat., Hist. Eccles., lib. vi., cap. 18.

padocia, where he was seized with a severe fever, the necessary consequence of the extreme fatigue to which his exhausted frame had been exposed. He trusted, however, that he should be allowed to repose for a time in quiet, now that he was so far beyond the reach of the affectionate people who had provoked his enemies by rising in his defence. In this he was disappointed: he had hardly prepared himself for rest, when a party of rude and bigoted Monks surrounded the house in which he was lodged, and demanded his instant dismissal. The Governor of the town for some time endeavoured to appease the intolerant rancour of these religionists; but his efforts were repulsed with indignation, and the unfortunate Prelate was obliged to resume his journey, suffering as he was under the violent attacks of an acute fever. For more than a month he was exposed to the united evils of sickness, confinement in the midst of savage, implacable soldiers, and the many other troubles which to a sick and nervous traveller could not be trifling. At length, after a journey occupying about seventy days, he arrived with his guards at the town of Arcasias, among the ridges of Mount Taurus, where he was received by the Bishop of the place in a manner so affectionate, that it almost atoned for the toil to which he had been unjustly subjected in his long and painful travel. The same attention was also shown him by a wealthy layman of the town, who afforded him a comfortable lodging in his house, and sought, by every means in his power, to save him from the injuries of the severe climate to which he was thus suddenly exposed. For three years was the illustrious Prelate confined in this remote region; but his solitude and privations neither diminished the rancour of his enemies, nor injured the activity of his mind. The attempts which were made in his favour by numerous partisans, as well in the West as in the East, stirred up the base and interested faction which had procured his deposition, to employ the vilest arts to prevent his restoration. How little he feared their menaces, or was deterred by them from pursuing the course which his conscience had marked out to him, was made sufficiently evident by the bold and extensive plans he continued to form for the reformation of the church. Comprehending in his paternal affection every district over which he could exercise any influence, he from time to time addressed the people in letters, the eloquence of which lost none of its force from the recollection of his misfortunes; but, by its effect on the popular mind, made both his private enemies, and the enemies of religion itself, tremble for the success of their machinations. It was while filled with apprehensions at these repeated attacks of the exiled Bishop on their authority, that the party of Theophilus at Constantinople renewed their appeals to the wavering Arcadius, and obtained an order for the further removal of Chrysostom to the town of Pytius, a wretched, lonely place at the extremity of the desert of that name, on the eastern shore of the Euxine. The commission was executed in the same ruthless manner as that which had directed his removal from Constantinople. Though suffering under the weight of accumulating infirmities, he was hurried along with all the speed which his robust and merciless guards could use; and he had not yet reached the

coast of the Euxine, when the little strength he possessed was exhausted, and he fell a martyr to their barbarity.*

It was truly lamentable to witness the unworthy advances which were made about this time by Christianity, and encouraged by some of her leading Ministers, with a view to reconcile at least her external differences with Paganism.† And, no doubt, they were very effective in alluring those easy polytheists, whose piety was satisfied with numerous festivals in celebration of the exploits of mortals deified; for with them the change was only in the name of the Deity, not in the principles of the religion. At the same time, it must be observed, that the Pagans, on their side, made the concession of sacrifice, or at least of immolation, which was the centre of their whole system. They were indulged with a sort of polytheism of saints and martyrs, and even sensible objects of worship were not withheld from them. But those beings and images were to be approached only with prayer and supplication; and if it was presently found expedient to permit *offerings* to be made to them, their shrines were never contaminated with the blood of victims. By this degrading compromise the church was filled by numerous converts, who believed, and who were probably taught to believe, that the worship which they had deserted was by no means essentially dissimilar from that which they had embraced; and who continued, after their admission, to perpetuate and exaggerate those corruptions by which alone the resemblance was created. Here, then, we discover the root of several of the abuses of the Papacy: they were concessions made during this critical period to the genius of Paganism, in order to entice its votaries into more speedy conformity, and to accelerate the dissolution of the one religion into the other. The immediate object was accomplished: to diminish the numerical display of polytheism, and prematurely to crowd the churches and processions with nominal Christians. But the lasting result has been to darken and disfigure the features of Christianity, not in one race only, or for one age, but through a period of which fourteen centuries have already been accomplished, and of which we cannot yet foresee the termination.‡ Various circumstances conduced to the approach of Christianity to this polytheistic form, or at least to permit, what it is difficult to call by any other name than "polytheistic" habits and feelings of devotion. It attributed, however vaguely, to subordinate beings some of the inalienable powers and attributes of

* Stebbing, History of the Christian Church, vol. i., p. 251. A heavy charge has been brought against Chrysostom, on account of the efforts he made to enlarge the boundaries and increase the power of his patriarchate. The authority which he exercised led to the idea that he was a sort of Vicar to the Roman Pontiff: a notion which could only have had its rise among the most zealous defenders of the Papal supremacy. (See Basnage, Histoire de l'Eglise, lib. vi., cap. 2.)

† In the year 410, Synesius a Platonic philosopher of Cyrene, was ordained Bishop of Ptolemais, by Theophilus of Alexandria. Synesius remonstrated against this election, declared himself to be a Platonist, and specified several points in which his speculative opinions differed from those of the Christians. But as he was an agreeable orator, and had much influence in the province, his objections were overlooked, and after receiving baptism he entered upon his episcopal functions. This is far from being the only instance of the pliancy of the early church, at a period, too, when it had no excuse from fear or persecution. (Waddington.)

‡ Waddington, History of the Church, vol. i., p. 235.

the Deity. Under the whole of this form lay the sum of Christian doctrine; but that which was constantly presented to the minds of men was the host of subordinate, indeed, but still active and influential, mediators between the Deity and the world of man. Throughout (as has already been, and will presently again be indicated) existed the vital and essential difference between Christianity and Paganism. It is possible that the controversies about the Trinity, and the divine nature of Christ, tended indirectly to the promotion of this worship of the Virgin, of angels, of saints, and martyrs. The great object of the victorious, to a certain extent, of both parties, was the closest approximation—in one sense, the identification—of the Saviour with the unseen and incomprehensible Deity. Though the human nature of Christ was as strenuously asserted in theory, it was not dwelt upon with the same earnestness and constancy as his divine. To magnify, to purify this from all earthly leaven, was the object of all eloquence: theologic disputes on this point withdrew or diverted the attention from the life of Christ as simply related in the Gospels. Christ became the object of a remoter, a more awful, adoration. The mind therefore began to seek out, or eagerly to seize, some other more material beings in closer alliance with human sympathies. The constant propensity of man to humanize his Deity, checked, as it were, by the receding majesty of the Saviour, readily clung with its devotion to humbler objects.* The weak wing of the common and unenlightened mind could not soar to the unapproachable light in which Christ dwelt with the Father: it dropped to the earth, and bowed itself down before some less mysterious object of veneration. In theory it was always a different and inferior kind of worship; but the feelings, especially impassioned devotion, know no logic: they pause not; it would chill them to death if they were to pause for these fine and subtle distinctions. The gentle ascent by which admiration, reverence, gratitude, and love, swelled up to awe, to veneration, to worship, both as regards the feelings of the individual and the general sentiment, was imperceptible. Men passed from rational respect for the remains of the dead,† the communion of holy thought and emotion, which might connect the departed saint with his brethren in the flesh, to the superstitious veneration of relics, and the deification of mortal men, by so easy a transition, that they never

* The progress of the worship of saints and angels has been fairly and impartially traced by Shroeck, and others. In the account of the martyrdom of Polycarp, it is said, "We love the martyrs as disciples and followers of the Lord." The Fathers of the next period leave the saints and martyrs in a kind of intermediate state, the bosom of Abraham, or paradise, as explained by Tertullian, contra Marcion., iv. 34; Apologet. 47. Compare Iren. adv. Hæres. v., cap. 31; Justin. Dialog. cum Tryph.; Orig. Homil. vi., in Levit.

† The growth of the worship of relics is best shown by the prohibitory law of Theodosius, against the removal and sale of saints' bodies. "Nemo martyres distrahat, nemo mercetur." Augustine denies that worship was ever offered to Apostles or saints. "Quis autem audivit aliquando fidelium stantem sacerdotem ad altare etiam super sanctum corpus martyris ad Dei honorem cultumque constructum, dicere in precibus, Offero tibi sacrificium, Petre vel Paule, vel Cypriane, cum apud eorum memorias offeratur Deo qui eos et homines et martyres fecit, et sanctis suis angelis cœlesti honore sociavit." De Civit. Dei, viii. 27. Compare xvii. 10, where he asserts miracles to be performed at their tombs. (Milman.)

discovered the precise point at which they had transgressed the unmarked and unwatched boundary.

This new polytheizing Christianity, therefore, was still subordinate and subsidiary, to adopt the language of Mr. Milman, in the theologic creed to the true Christian worship; but it usurped its place in the heart, and rivalled it in the daily language and practices of devotion. The worshipper felt and acknowledged his dependency, and looked for protection or support to these new intermediate beings, the intercessors with the great Intercessor. They were arrayed by the general belief in some of the attributes of the Deity. According to that belief, they had ubiquity; the perpetual cognizance of the affairs of the earth; they could hear the prayer; they could read the heart; they could control nature; they had power, derivative, indeed, from a higher source, but still exercised according to their volition over all the events of the world. Thus each city, and almost each individual, began to have his tutelar saint; the presence of some beatified being hovered over and hallowed particular spots; and thus the strong influence of local and particular worships combined again with that great universal faith of which the supreme Father was the sole object and the universal temple.* Still, however, this new polytheism differed in its influence, as well as in its nature, from that of Paganism. It bore a constant reference to another state of existence. Though the office of the tutelary being was to avert and mitigate temporal suffering, yet it was still more so to awaken and keep alive the sentiments of the religious being. They were not merely the agents of the divine providential government on earth, but indissolubly connected with the hopes and fears of the future state of existence.†

This mournful state of affairs gives an involuntary interrogative, and suggests a melancholy answer. The influence of the Clergy must evidently have been greatly diminished, or the manners of their respective congregations could never have acquired that strong taint of corruption to which so many allusions are made in the writings of the times. Or, if this were not the case, the Clergy in general must themselves have ceased to lay that stress upon sanctity as an essential in the Christian character which formerly constituted the basis of their addresses. Whichever be true, there can be little

* An illustration of the new form assumed by Christian worship may be collected from the works of Paulinus, who, in eighteen poems, celebrates the nativity of Felix, the tutelary saint of Nola. Felix is at least invested with the powers ascribed to the intermediate deities of antiquity. Pilgrims crowded from the whole of the south of Italy to the festival of Felix. Rome herself, though she possessed the altars of the Apostles Peter and Paul, poured forth her myriads; the Capenian gate was choked, the Appian Way was covered, with the devout worshippers. Multitudes came from beyond the sea. Felix is implored by his servants to remove the impediments to their pilgrimages from the hostility of men, or adverse weather; to smooth the sea, and send propitious winds. There is constant reference indeed to Christ, as the source of this power; yet the power is fully and explicitly assigned to the saint. He is the prevailing intercessor between the worshipper and Christ. But the vital distinction between this paganizing form of Christianity and Paganism itself is no less manifest in these poems. It is not merely as a tutelary deity in this life that the saint is invoked; the future state of existence, and the final judgment, are constantly present to the thoughts of the worshipper. Felix is entreated after death to bear the souls of his worshippers into the bosom of the Redeemer, and to intercede for them at the last day. (Milman.)

† Milman, History of Christianity, vol. iii., p. 543.

doubt that the superior orders of the hierarchy, with the exception of some few distinguished men, no longer exhibited those examples of self-denial and meekness, of patient piety and laborious attention to their duties, which had till of late been the sole foundation on which they rested their claims to the respect of the people. There were several causes, perhaps, at work in the production of this change; but the most prominent, and apparently the most active, was the too great familiarity which the heads of churches had contracted with courts and Princes. John the Baptist could occupy only the dungeon of Herod's palace, and sad would it have been for the early community had Paul, won by the praises of Festus or Felix, become their convert, while he endeavoured to make them his. But the wretched condition of the empire contributed in no small degree to disturb the tranquillity and advancement of the church. Christians appeared to have embarked their chief treasure in the same vessel as the rest of mankind; and having been delivered by the mercy of God from the evils of present persecution, they seemed to have returned to the world, that they might suffer in its miseries and toil.

Theodosius had ceased to reign several years before Chrysostom was summoned to the pontifical throne of Constantinople. The East was governed by women and eunuchs. In assuming the episcopal throne of the metropolis, to which he is said to have been transported almost by force, Chrysostom, who could not but be conscious of his power over the minds of men, might entertain visions of the noblest and purest ambition. His views of the dignity of the sacerdotal character were as lofty as those of his contemporaries in the West: while he asserted the authority which set them apart and far above the rest of mankind, he demanded a moral superiority, and entire devotion to their calling, which could not but rivet their authority upon the minds of men. The Clergy, such as his glowing imagination conceived them, would unite the strongest corporate spirit with the highest individual zeal and purity. The influence of the Bishop in Antioch, the deference which Theodosius had shown to the intercession of Flavianus, might encourage Chrysostom in the fallacious hope of restoring peace, virtue, and piety, as well as orthodoxy, in the imperial city. But in the East, more particularly in the metropolis, the sacerdotal character never assumed the unassailable sanctity, the awful inviolability, which it attained in the West. The religion of Constantinople was that of the Emperor. Instead of growing up like the Bishop of Rome, first to independence, afterwards to sovereignty, the presence of the imperial government overawed and obscured the religious supremacy. In Rome, the Bishop was subject at all times to the rebellious control of the aristocracy, or exposed to the irreverent fury of the populace; but he constantly emerged from his transient obscurity, and resumed his power. In Constantinople, a voluptuous court, a savage populace, at this period multitudes of concealed Arians, and heretics of countless shades and hues, at all periods thwarted the plans, debased the dignity, and desecrated the person of the Patriarch of Constantinople.*

* Milman, History of Christianity, vol. iii., p. 218.

A canon of the Council of Carthage, which was held a short period previous to this era, forbade the study of secular books by the Bishops; and this event has marked a crisis in the history of Christian literature. A deplorable dearth of learning followed this crisis, and scarcely three names were recognised as celebrated for any talent or acquirement. However, we must not attribute this rapid defection to the injudicious ordinance in question; since its authority was not universal, and since injunctions of that description are seldom obeyed except by such as are previously disposed to receive them. It was an index, rather than a cause, of the altering spirit of the church; and as such we record it. The real reasons of that defection, and of the darkness which followed it, are two: the first of these, which alone perhaps might gradually have completed the extinction of sound learning, was the internal corruption of Christianity, and the spreading influence of Monachism. An age of prodigies and relics and Stylites, was not proper for the growth of genius, or the cultivation of knowledge; and the little of either which survived in the East, may have owed its existence to the dissensions of the Christians, as much as to their virtues. The second reason was the frequent irruption and final settlement of the barbarian conquerors. This cause was, indeed, confined almost entirely to the provinces of the West; but the wounds which it inflicted there were deeper and of more extensive influence than might at first have been apprehended. It afforded a fearful prospect, that those hordes of colonists were wholly uninstructed in literary acquirements, and even generally prejudiced against them. Theodoric himself, the wisest, as well as the best, among their Princes, while he respected the superior civilization of the vanquished, despised and disclaimed that art, which seemed to be employed for no other end than to inflame and perpetuate religious controversy. He could never be prevailed upon to learn to read. But the cause which increased and prolonged that mischief, and created many others, was the superstitious disposition which the invaders brought with them. They had learnt, as a rudiment of their own religion, a subservient reverence for their priesthood, and this principle accompanied them into the Christian church; the priesthood received without reluctance the unbounded homage which was offered to them; their authority grew with that obsequiousness, and their ambition swelled with their authority; and when they found how easily this could be maintained and extended over a credulous people, and how certainly credulity is the offspring of ignorance, they became interested in perpetuating blindness and prejudice.*

Notwithstanding the deterioration of Christianity, it continued to spread into the regions of Paganism. The inhabitants of Libanus and Anti-Libanus accepted baptism from a Syrian Monk, whose name and title are still famous. Simeon Stylites, or Simeon of the Pillar, had for many years sat, knelt, or stood on the top of a lofty pillar within the enclosure of a rude cloister in the desert of Telanessa, receiving the applauses of the whole country, giving audience

* Waddington, History of the Church, vol. i., p. 261.

to applicants of all ranks, who expected him to afford them miraculous assistance, and uttering decisions on theological disputes. The story of the conversion of the Libanites, divested of fabulous ornament, may perhaps be thus related. Those Heathens had fallen under the terror of a superstition still rife in some parts of the East, and believed in the transformation of human beings into beasts of prey.* Cunning impostors kept up the delusion until it became insufferable, and they betook themselves to the saint of the pillar, trusting that his power would prove superior to that of their tormentors. He enjoined on them, first, the solemn erection of crosses in the most troubled parts of their country; secondly, watches to be kept around those crosses for three days together, and as many nights; (a proceeding admirably calculated to overawe the nocturnal ramblers, who imitated the howlings of wild beasts;) and, thirdly, a general baptism. The scheme succeeded so well, that the poor creatures fancied themselves Christians. The influence of the Stylite was also increased beyond measure; his enmity might have been formidable; and we are sorry to learn from Evagrius, that Theodosius, after he had compelled the Christians of Antioch to restore to the Jews of that city the synagogues of which they had taken forcible possession, was induced, by his remonstrances, to rescind his own act, give sanction to the robbery,† displace the Magistrate who had interceded with him on behalf of the persecuted Jews, and ask pardon of the aërial saint, who feared no other Emperor but God.

Many of the barbarian tribes also, in establishing themselves in their newly-acquired conquests, embraced the faith; and even a large body of Jews, inhabitants of Crete, opening their eyes to the true meaning of their prophetic records, acknowledged their fulfilment in the person of Christ. The immediate cause of their conversion deserves to be mentioned, as indicative of the ready attention given in this age to the boldest pretenders to divine authority. One of their own nation, taking advantage of their enthusiasm, declared himself to be Moses, and asserted that he had been sent from heaven to conduct them through the sea to the land of promise, as he had done in ancient times through the Red Sea. Having assured them, moreover, that they had no farther need of money, on the day appointed for their setting forth, he led them to a promontory which overhung the sea, and commanded them to leap with confidence into the deep. The foremost ranks of the deluded multitude instantly obeyed; and while numbers of them sunk to rise no more, others lay mangled on the sharp points of the jutting rocks, or were seen struggling for life amid the waves. Some were saved by the humane exertions of fishermen and Christian merchants; and the rest of the assembly, undeceived by the miserable fate of their companions, gladly returned to their homes, and, having been led to reflection, forthwith embraced Christianity. The impostor himself was never more seen or heard

* See Gobat's Journal of three Years' Residence in Abyssinia, on the Boudas, May 18th, 1830; Life, &c., of Nathanael Pearce, vol. ii., Appendix I., and compare with the account of Simeon given by Assemann, Bibliotheca Orientalis, i., 242, *seq.*

† Evagrius, Hist. Eccles. i., 13.

of; and it was the belief of many, that he must have been an evil spirit in a human shape.

In this century Ireland was converted by the preaching of the celebrated Patrick, who, after labouring in that country forty years, at length established a metropolitan church at Armagh. Whatever degree of prosperity, moreover, may seem indicated by this event, it was fearfully counterbalanced by the violence which the yet unconverted barbarians exercised against the vanquished Christians, and by the dissensions which prevailed to so deplorable an extent among the Christians themselves. On looking beyond the immediate confines of Christendom, a still darker scene presents itself.

Persia, about the year 421, was deluged with Christian blood, and tortures were endured by the faithful not inferior to those which had been suffered by their forefathers in the reign of Nero. Even here, however, our sympathy is checked by well-grounded suspicions, that this persecution owed its origin as much to the imprudence of the Christians as to the cruelty or enmity of the Persians. The first occasion of dispute was afforded by Abda, Bishop of Suza, who pulled down one of the temples dedicated to fire; and, on refusing to repair the injury at the command of the King, was put to death. The Persians appear to have satisfied themselves on this occasion with retaliating on the sect in general, by pulling down their churches; and the fiercer spirit of revenge which broke out some time after, is attributable to the belief which prevailed, that the Romans, then at war with Persia, were aided by their secret counsels. On the death of Isdegerdes, the Persian King, the nation, as if by hereditary succession, devolved the war against the church upon his son Gororanes; and it is not easy to describe the various species of punishments which were invented to torture the faithful. Some had their hands flayed, and others their backs. Some had the skin torn off the face, from the forehead to the chin. Others had reeds, which had been split in half, fastened round their bodies, and bound on as tightly as possible, from head to foot, then each of the reeds was dragged off with great force, bearing with it the adjacent skin. This operation occasioned great agony. The persecutors also dug pits, and filled them with mice: they then threw the pious defenders of the faith into these pits, after having first bound their hands and their feet, so that they could not drive off the vermin. The mice, pressed by hunger, devoured their flesh, thus occasioning exquisite torture. Besides these cruelties, the persecutors devised and executed yet more barbarous punishments, which were suggested to them by the enemy of human nature and truth. But nothing could shake the fortitude of these defenders of the faith. Some of them voluntarily surrendered themselves to the persecutors, desiring to receive the death which leads to immortal life. I shall, says Theodoret, relate the sufferings of two or three of these holy men, in order that their fortitude may convey an idea of that of others. Hormisdas was descended from the illustrious race of Aclemenides, and was the son of a Prefect. When the King heard that he was a Christian, he sent for him, and desired him to deny God the Saviour. But he told the King, that this com-

mand was neither just nor expedient. "Whoever," said he, "can be easily induced to contemn and deny the God of the universe, would be much more easily persuaded to despise Kings, who are but men, and by nature subject to death. If it be a crime deserving capital punishment, O King," continued he, "to deny your power, how much more deserving of punishment is he who denies the Creator of all things!" The King, instead of admiring the wisdom of this admirable speech, deprived him of his possessions and of his honours, and commanded him to take charge of the camels of the army. After many days had elapsed, the King, as he was looking through a window, caught sight of this great man, and perceived that he had become tanned by the heat of the sun, and that he was covered with dust. Remembering his illustrious parentage, the King sent for him, and ordered him to be attired in a linen tunic. Then, thinking that his mind would be subdued by his former labour, contrasted with the present kind treatment afforded him, he said to him, "Do not now persist in carrying on this contention, but renounce the Son of the carpenter." Hormisdas, full of divine zeal, tore, in the presence of the King, the tunic which he had given him, and said, "If by this present you thought to seduce me from religion, take back your gift." The King, perceiving his fortitude, banished him, naked as he was, out of the kingdom. The King also discovering that Suenas, a wealthy man possessed of a thousand slaves, would not consent to deny his Creator, asked him which of his slaves was the most wicked. To this very slave the King gave authority over the whole family, and desired that he should be waited on by his master. He also gave the wife of Suenas in marriage to this slave; hoping by these means to subdue the faith of this defender of the truth. But this hope was frustrated; for Suenas had built his house upon a rock. A certain Deacon, named Benjamin, was seized, and cast into prison. Two years after, a Roman Ambassador arrived in Persia, who was sent upon some special embassy. He heard of the imprisonment of the Deacon, and entreated the King to release him. The King consented, on condition that Benjamin would promise not to instruct any of the Magi in the Christian doctrines. The Ambassador promised, in his own name, that Benjamin would comply with this condition. But Benjamin, on hearing the declaration of the Ambassador, exclaimed, "I cannot refrain from communicating the light which I have received. The punishment of which those are worthy who hide their talents, is declared in the holy Gospel." The King, not being aware that such a reply had been made by Benjamin, commanded him to be released from captivity. After he had been set at liberty, he continued as usual to seek out those who were in the darkness of ignorance, and to lead them to the light of truth. About a year after, the King was informed of these proceedings: he sent for him, and commanded him to deny the God he worshipped. He asked the King what punishment would be merited by one of his subjects who should leave the kingdom, and prefer to dwell in some other region? The King having answered that he would be worthy of death, and of the greatest vengeance, this wise man said, "Of what

punishment, then, is not that man worthy, who forsakes his Creator to make a god of one of his fellow-servants, and to render him the worship which he owes to God!" The King was highly provoked at this reply, and commanded twenty reeds to be forced up the nails of his hands and of his feet. But perceiving that he turned this punishment into ridicule, he ordered pointed reeds to be thrust into the most sensitive parts of his person, which produced unspeakable agony. The generous defender of the faith was afterwards impaled, and in this condition he gave up his spirit. Numberless other barbarities were perpetrated by the Persians. It must not, however, be regarded as a matter of surprise, that these acts of cruelty and impiety were permitted by the great Ruler of the universe; for, previous to the reign of the great Emperor Constantine, all the Roman Emperors furiously persecuted the defenders of the truth. Diocletian, also, on the day of the commemoration of our Saviour's sufferings, demolished all the sacred edifices which were in the Roman empire. But nine years afterwards these churches were rebuilt in a far higher style of magnificence and grandeur than before, whereas Diocletian perished in his impiety. The wars in which the church was involved, and her subsequent victory, were predicted by our Lord. It is evident, says Theodoret, that war is more profitable to us than peace; for while the one renders us effeminate, heedless, and timid, the other inspires us with vigilance, and with contempt for the things which are passing away.*

The faithful of both sexes were still subject to heavy and protracted persecution, especially in the East, and from members of the same persuasion, and professing the common faith. The first whom we shall name was Nicarete, a lady of Bithynia, who belonged to a very illustrious family, and well known on account of her virtuous life and actions. She bore with invincible fortitude the calamities which befell her; saw herself unjustly despoiled of the greater part of her ample patrimony without manifesting any indignation, and managed the little that remained to her with so much economy, that, although she was advanced in age, she contrived to supply all the wants of her household, and to contribute largely to the relief of the poor. To great charity she added so much ingenuity, that she was able to compound medicines for those who were suffering from sickness, and she frequently succeeded in curing patients who had derived no benefit from the skill of the Physicians. Olympias, a Deaconess, was dragged before the tribunal, and interrogated by the Prefect, with regard to the charge of having set fire to the church at Constantinople. She replied, "My past life ought to avert all suspicion from me; for I have devoted my large property to the reconstruction and embellishment of the churches of God." The Prefect alleged that he was well acquainted with her past course of life. "Then," continued she, "you ought to appear as our accuser, instead of sitting as our Judge." As the accusation against her was wholly unsubstantiated by proof, and as the Prefect found that he had no reason on which he could justly

* Theodoreti Hist. Eccles., lib. v., cap. 39.

blame her, he adopted another tone, and, as if desirous of advising her, represented to her and the other ladies, that it was absurd in them to secede from communion with their Bishop, and thereby entail trouble upon themselves. They all deferred to the advice of the Prefect with the exception of Olympias, who said to him, "It is not just that, after having been publicly calumniated without having had anything proved against me, I should be obliged to clear myself of charges totally unconnected with the accusation in question. Let me rather take counsel concerning the original accusation that has been preferred against me. For even if you resort to unlawful compulsion, I will not hold communion with those from whom I ought to secede, nor consent to anything that is contrary to the principles of piety." The Prefect, finding that he could not prevail upon her to hold communion with Arsacius, dismissed her, that she might consult the Advocates. On another occasion, however, he again sent for her, and condemned her to pay a heavy fine; for he imagined that by this means she would be compelled to change her mind. But she totally disregarded the loss of her property, and quitted Constantinople for Cyzicus. Tigris, a Presbyter, was, about the same period, stripped of his clothes, scourged on the back, bound hand and foot, and stretched on the rack. He was a foreigner, and an eunuch, but not by birth. He was originally a slave in the house of a person of rank, and on account of his faithful services had obtained his freedom. He was afterwards ordained as a Presbyter, and was distinguished by his moderation and meekness of disposition, and by his charity towards strangers and the poor. Eutropius, a Reader, was also required to name the persons who had set fire to the church; but although he was scourged severely, his sides and cheeks torn with iron nails, and lighted torches applied to the most sensitive parts of his body, no confession could be extorted from him, notwithstanding his youth and delicacy of constitution. After having been subjected to these tortures, he was cast into a dungeon, where he soon after expired.*

We have already dwelt on the condemnation of Chrysostom. He seized the first opportunity the absence of his friends afforded him to surrender himself to the imperial officers; but, owing to an earthquake which took place the same night, he was forthwith recalled. It was but at an early period of this century that Innocent, who occupied the episcopal chair at Rome, expired. On account of his general acquaintance with the laws and traditions of the church, he was frequently consulted by the Western and Eastern Prelates on points both of faith and discipline: of this he took advantage to lay down, with an air of authority, many false and dangerous principles, all tending to the diminution of the episcopal power, and the advancement of the Papal. The dignity of the apostolic see was the burden of his epistles, which he improved into a claim of supremacy; and to him the episcopal chair of Rome was more indebted for the grandeur it afterwards attained, than to all his predecessors. He formed the plan of that spiritual monarchy which they, by constant application, established at length, notwithstanding the almost insurmountable

* Sozom., Hist. Eccles., lib. viii., cap. 24.

difficulties with which they had to contend. He was the first who, changing the ancient foundation of the primacy, claimed it as the successor of Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, and not as the Bishop of the first city, though on that consideration alone it had been granted by the Councils. He claimed by divine right the power of finally deciding all ecclesiastical controversies and disputes, and thus an unlimited jurisdiction; and furnished his successors with a pretence, to plead some antiquity for the opinions and principles which they in a short period eagerly pursued,* and none more than Gregory VII. A statue of the Empress Eudoxia was about to be erected, which gave fresh ground of offence to the faithful, and on these occasions of public festivity the people were wont to be indulged in dances, pantomimes, and every kind of theatrical amusement. The zeal of Chrysostom was always especially directed against these idolatrous amusements, and on this occasion his invective was unsparing. An edict of the Emperor again suspended the Prelate, and fresh tumults arose. In the midst of the solemn celebration of Good-Friday, the military forced their way, not merely into the nave, but up to the altar, on which were placed the consecrated elements. Many were trodden under foot; many wounded by the swords of the soldiers; the Clergy were dragged to prison; some females, who were about to be baptized, were obliged to flee with disordered apparel; the water of the font was stained with blood; the soldiers pressed up to the altar, and seized the sacred vessels as their plunder. Constantinople for several days had the appearance of a city which had been stormed; and wherever the partisans of Chrysostom were assembled, they were assaulted and dispersed by the soldiery. His final banishment to Cucusus in Armenia took place; but in that miserable seclusion he was not allowed peaceably to remain. Sometimes his life was endangered by the invasion of the Isaurian marauders, and he was obliged to take refuge in a neighbouring fortress, named Ardissa, where he even encouraged the hope of restoration; but he did not calculate aright the obstinate and implacable resentment of his persecutors. He was at length ordered to be removed to Pityus, on the Euxine, a still more savage place on the verge of the empire, and died on the journey thither. The most remarkable feature in the persecution of Chrysostom is, that it arose not out of difference of doctrine, or polemic hostility. No charge of heresy darkened the pure fame of the great Christian orator. His persecution had not the dignity of conscientious bigotry, it was a struggle for power between the temporal and ecclesiastical supremacy; but the passions and personal animosities of Ecclesiastics, the ambition, and perhaps the jealousy, of the Alexandrian Patriarch, as to jurisdiction, lent themselves to the degradation of the episcopal authority in Constantinople, from which it never rose. No doubt the choleric temper, the overstrained severity, the monastic habits, the ambition to extend his authority, perhaps beyond its legitimate bounds, and the indiscreet zeal of Chrysostom, laid him open to his adversaries; but in any other station, in the episco-

* Bower's History of the Popes, vol. i., p. 328.

pate of any other city, these infirmities would have been lost in the splendour of his talents and of his virtues. Though he might not have weaned the general mass of the people from their vices, yet he would have commanded their respect; and nothing less than a schism, arising out of religious difference, would have shaken or impaired his authority. At all events, the fall of Chrysostom was a warning which might repress the energy of future Prelates; and doubtless the issue of this conflict materially tended to degrade the office of the chief Bishop in the Eastern empire. And it may be questioned whether the proximity of the court, and such a court as that of the East, would, in any circumstances, have allowed the episcopate to assume its legitimate power, far less to encroach on the temporal sovereignty. But after this time, the Bishop of Constantinople almost became a mere officer of state: appointed by the influence of, if not directly nominated by, the Emperor, his gratitude was bound to reverence, or his prudence to dread, that arbitrary power which had raised him from nothing, and might dismiss him to his former insignificance. Except on some rare occasions, he bowed with the rest of the empire before the capricious will of the Sovereign, or the ruling favourite; he was content if the Emperor respected the outward ceremonial of the church, and did not openly espouse any heretical doctrine.*

The veneration of the relics of martyrs, which began very early,† now became excessive; being, indeed, but another form of Heathenism.‡ During the perilous and gloomy days of persecution, the reverence for those who endured martyrdom for the religion of Christ had grown up out of the best feelings of man's improved nature. Reverence gradually grew into veneration, worship, adoration. Although the more enlightened maintained a marked distinction between the honour shown to the martyrs, and that addressed to God, the line was too fine not to be transgressed by excited popular feeling. The Heathen writers constantly taunt the Christians with the substituting of the new idolatry for the old. The charge of worshipping dead men's bones, and the remains of malefactors, constantly recurs. A pagan philosopher, in the fourth century, contemptuously selects some barbarous names of African martyrs, and inquires whether they are more worthy objects of worship than Minerva or Jove.§ But the modern sceptic, whose derision falls equally on Christianity and on the practices of those who have corrupted Christianity, while he discerns but little ridiculous in the idolatry which it displaced, must be reminded that Paganism abounded

* Milman, History of Christianity, vol. iii., p. 238.

† Mosheim, De Reb. Christ. ante Const., Sæc. I., sec. 32.

‡ Rochette, in his essays, has illustrated the extraordinary care with which the Heathen buried along with the remains of the dead every kind of utensil, implements of trade, down to the dolls of children; even food and knives and forks. This appears from all the tombs which are opened, from the most ancient Etruscan, to the most modern Heathen, sepulchres.

§ "Quis enim ferat Jovi fulmina vibranti præferri Mygdonenem; Junoni, Minervæ, Veneri, Vestæque Sanaem, et cunctis (prop nefas!) diis immortalibus archimartyrem Nymphanionem, inter quos Lucitas haud minore cutu suscipitur, atque alii interminato numero; diisque hominibusque odiosa nomina." (See August. Epistol., xvi.)

in absurdities equally gross, to say the least, and in traditions immeasurably more monstrous.

Theodosius the Younger succeeded his father Arcadius, but the government was in the hands of Anthemius the Prefect for several years, when it was assumed by Pulcheria, the sister of Theodosius, who held it till his death in 450. In 421 he had married Eudocia, the daughter of Leontius, an Athenian sophist. Theodosius was a weak Prince. The whole government was carried on in his name; but he blindly acquiesced in all that his sister did. His long reign was one of almost undisturbed peace, and is memorable for the collection of laws that was made in it, and known by the name of *Codex Theodosianus*, which was completed and promulgated in the Eastern empire, 438. The comparative imbecility of Theodosius brought forward, in bold relief, Pulcheria, of whom Sozomen relates that, although she was not yet fifteen years of age when Arcadius died, she had received a spirit of piety and wisdom beyond her years, determined to remain unmarried, and persuaded her sisters to do the same, lest any other man should, by means of relationship with them, usurp the empire, to the exclusion of their brother, or be the occasion of envy and intrigues. While she provided the best masters for her brother during his minority, she applied herself assiduously to study, that she might speak and write correctly both Greek and Latin. She built churches, and enriched them with costly gifts; honoured the Ministers of religion and all good men, assisted those who desired to prosecute sacred studies, laboured to prevent the circulation of heretical doctrine, erected buildings for the reception of paupers, and monasteries for those who wished to leave, as they thought, the world. She and her devout sisters were reputed to possess the gift of prophecy: a gift once possessed by some members of the church, but probably withdrawn long before her day. The imperial family, under her direction, was distinguished by simplicity and frugality, and a severe and conventual style of living, utterly unlike the magnificence usually found in palaces.* This same writer adds to his record of easily-attested facts a tale about the apparition of a deceased martyr to Pulcheria, for the sake of directing her to a spot where the bones of forty martyrs lay interred;† but this may safely be rejected as incredible, because contrary to many evidences of holy Scripture, that, far from affording supernatural inducements to the veneration of relics, or of so called holy places, it has always pleased God to obviate or to discourage all such superstitious practices.

Meanwhile, the decline of the Western empire was accelerated by the cowardice of Honorius at its head, the murder of his faithful and often victorious General, Stilicho, and the sack of Rome by Alaric the Goth. The province of Africa was agitated by the Donatist controversy; and multitudes of ultra-Donatists, distinguished as *Circumcelliones*, committed the most barbarous excesses, roaming over the country, and murdering the members of the original church, whether Clergy or laity, wherever they could do so with impunity. A decree

* Sozomen., Hist. Eccles., lib. ix., cap. 1, 3. † Ibid., lib. ix., cap. 2.

of Honorius, granting them liberty of conscience, had but emboldened them to greater violence; and, at an assemblage of both the parties at Carthage, in the year 410, where Augustine pleaded powerfully on the side of ecclesiastical order, it was found impossible to effect a reconciliation; and, as all parties were accustomed, in those days, to appeal to the Emperor, Theodosius II., successor of Honorius, confirmed the sentence of his representative, who had presided at the Council, and issued a decree condemnatory of the Donatists altogether, involving alike the peaceable and the turbulent in the penalties of fine, confiscation, or banishment, and even inflicting death on the most obstinate. The penalties were excessive, no doubt, and imperial justice might have been satisfied with suppressing outrages of public peace; but the Donatists cannot be acknowledged worthy of memory among Christian martyrs. They took the sword, and, in turn, perished by the sword. The same weapon was employed, without so fair a pretext, not by an Emperor, but by a Bishop,—by Theophilus, Bishop of Alexandria, who, under pretence of purifying the monasteries of the desert of Nitria, in Egypt, from the errors of Origenism, employed soldiers to drive out the Monks, and chase them from the country.

The son of a Hungarian soldier, if not born, at least educated, at Ticinum, in Italy, the present Pavia, received the first lessons and hallowing influences of Christianity in early childhood. When only ten years of age, he sought peace to his soul, became a catechumen of the church, and would gladly have incorporated himself at once in a monastic fraternity, to escape the discomfort of a pagan home; but his father, being a military Tribune in the imperial service, and probably full of the martial spirit which still characterizes the people of Hungary, constrained him to enter the army. At eighteen he was baptized, and, at the age of twenty, after having borne arms for two years, put off the material armour, and, in the pursuance of the long-cherished desire, became a Monk. But it was after the Christians in Tours, a city and diocess of Gaul, had unanimously elected him to be their Bishop, that Martin of Tours rose into eminence as an unwearied propagator of external Christianity in that province. Sometimes he dwelt in his monastery, surrounded by about eighty disciples, whose extreme veneration magnified even his ordinary actions into achievements of supernatural power; or, attended by multitudes of willing followers, he travelled from place to place, overturning the altars, and demolishing the temples, of enfeebled Paganism, and rearing Christian churches in their stead. Yet he inflicted no cruelty on the frequenters of those temples; and, although his rude zeal, with the trifling miracles attributed to him by his biographer, Sulpicius Severus, with the credulity then prevalent, might obscure the real excellence of his character, his remonstrances against the conduct of the Bishops who caused the judicial murder of the heretic Priscillian, his diligence, zeal, and habitual self-denial, must claim our respect, regardless of the opposite treatment his memory has received from the Romanists who adore him as canonized, and from the gentle spirits of our day who regard him as a fanatic. We will at least rejoice in those names which

figure in the Papal Breviary, of which it cannot be said that the men who bore them ever shed the blood either of heretic or martyr.

The *authenticated* legends of this devoted man contain no mention of this brightest feature of his character; but his demolition of the half-deserted fanes marked him as the final conqueror of Druidism; and the ancient Christian Gauls believed so devoutly in his valour and sanctity, that they carried his cloak with them to battle to insure victory; and it is remarked that Martin was the first confessor, the first who, without being martyred, received worship in the Latin church. But in the fifth century the Latin church was declining so rapidly, that its most active and eminent Clergy were unable to stem the current. Of this unhappy position Paulinus, Bishop of Nola, is an example. Surrounded by a grossly ignorant and ungodly population, and destitute of the baptism of the Holy One, which would have given him resistless power over the people of his diocess, he endeavoured, by external decorations, to supply the nakedness of the sanctuaries deserted of their glory. The deplorable idleness and dissoluteness of the crowds who came into Nola to celebrate the festivals, and especially the vigils, or nocturnal assemblies, are described and lamented by himself. They were so utterly untaught as not to know the common rules of Christian decency; and in their drunken carousals spilt the too abundant wine on the tombs of the saints;* and therefore, while, in classic and even scriptural style, he adorned both the interior and exterior of his church with inscriptions, which might instruct the few who could read them, he had paintings placed on the walls, that representations of the passage of the Red Sea, Joshua and the ark of God, Job covered with ulcers, Tobit smitten with blindness, and of Esther and Judith, examples of female excellence, might engage the visiters to remain within the building, and hear explanations of the pictures, instead of indulging their appetites in the neighbourhood,† during the intervals of public worship. But the glutton and the drunkard soon saw enough: the sermons of Paulinus, however entertaining, did not reach the heart, and could not subdue the passions; and the failure stands recorded in reproof to those who would foist upon the people the lead of an æsthetic substitute, for the pure gold of Gospel truth. Paulinus meant well, no doubt; and it would be unjust to charge him with idolatry, although he unintentionally encouraged its entrance, and ought to have respected a decision of the Council of Elvira, published a few years before, that paintings were not to be exhibited in churches, lest they should become an occasion of idolatry. One of our most excellent ecclesiastical historians‡ observes, that "the written word was neglected, and these poor substitutes were placed in its room." It was so eventually; but it is due to the name of Paulinus to say, that he made provision of the word of God in that very church, by having copies ready for perusal in a *secretarium*, or distinct apartment, with this inscription over the door:—

* Paulin., Carm. ad Felicem Martyrem.
† Paulin., Natal. Felicis, lib. ix., x.
‡ Milner, cent. viii., chap. 3.

"Si quem sancta tenet meditandi in lege voluntas,
Hic poterit residens sacris intendere libris."

"If any one feels a holy desire to meditate in the law, he may sit down here and peruse the sacred books." * The fearful sin of hiding the word of God had not yet been committed.

Jerome, a man of the preceding century, enjoyed, during the first twenty years of the fifth, a universal fame. His knowledge of the Hebrew language and some of its cognate dialects, at that time a rare, and almost singular, attainment, qualified him to translate the Old Testament into Latin, independently of the Septuagint Greek version; to comment on the text in a manner far superior to that of his contemporaries, especially Origen; and to leave invaluable literary treasures to the church, in his Version and biblical writings, which have already done much to counteract the force of errors propagated by himself. The student of sacred literature will always value the works of Jerome; but, on the other hand, it cannot be concealed that his asceticism was equal to his industry, and his impatience to his learning. It does not fall within the design of this work to portray with minute precision the character of one in whom were united the lore of the Rabbins, and the erudition of Italy and Greece; who was equally at home and equally influential in the monastic cells of Bethlehem, and in the palaces of Rome; at whose feet noble ladies and sordid Monks alternately poured their confessions, and who comprehended within the circle of amicable correspondence, or theological controversy, the most eminent persons of his day. He appears on this page chiefly as the opponent of Vigilantius.† Vigilantius is said to have been a native of Aquitaine, although he lived in Spain, was a Presbyter at Barcelona, and would be generally regarded as a Spaniard. Mariana calls him a native of Pamplona; but others have contended that he was not a Spaniard, but a Gaul, and that therefore the virgin soil of Spain suffers not the pollution of his birth. Be it so. He was a Gaul, but spent most of his time in Spain, and found many of the best men there to be quite of one mind with him. When a young man, he went to Italy, where he was kindly received by Paulinus, Bishop of Nola, who probably had known him when at Barcelona, and who entertained a high opinion of his piety. Bearing a letter commendatory from this friend, Vigilantius proceeded to Palestine, and presented himself to Jerome. The learned anchorite gave him a cordial welcome, and, when speaking of him afterwards, scrupled not to call him "the holy Priest Vigilantius;" which he certainly would not have done had there been anything unseemly in his deportment, or if at that time the views of the stranger had been contrary to his own. But, during a short residence in Palestine, and travels in Egypt and the East, where monachism was far more prevalent and more austere and superstitious than as yet in Europe, Vigilantius perceived its evil tendencies; and, on his return to Barcelona, openly declared against

* Paulin., epist. xii., ad Severum.

† Jovinian is associated with Vigilantius, both in the history of Jerome and in the list of heretics; but so little is known of Jovinian, that he cannot be more than mentioned here.

the whole system, and found many, both of the Clergy and the laity, quite willing to receive his doctrine, and second his endeavours to cast off the load of trifles which had recently obscured the purity of both faith and worship. He taught that relics ought not to be carried about, or laid up in the churches, as objects of religious veneration, much less worshipped, according to the practice of some, whom he called contemptuously *cinerarii*, or ashes-men, because they revered the bones and ashes of the dead. He further insisted that it was sinful to pay the accustomed honours at the tombs of the martyrs; that nocturnal assemblies were occasions of crime, and ought to be suppressed, a fact which the history of that century indubitably attests; that celibacy, which had been lately introduced into the church, was a heresy, and the spurious chastity of ecclesiastics and recluses merely a veil of secret abominations. "What need hast thou," said he, as we find in an extract produced by Jerome, "what need hast thou, not only to honour with so great honour, but also to adore, that—I know not what to call it—which thou keepest with so much care carried about in that little box?" And, again, in the same book: "Why dost thou kiss that dust, wrapped up for worship in a cloth?" And, further: "After the fashion of the Gentiles, we see introduced into churches, under pretext of religion, while yet the sun is shining, heaps of wax tapers lighted, and people kissing a bit of dust, or whatever it is, inclosed in a little box, and wrapped in precious linen. Men of this kind pay great honour to the blessed martyrs, whom they think to render illustrious by such vile ceremonies, but whom the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne enlightens with all the brightness of His majesty." Jerome was indignant. His anger burst all bounds of moderation. No name was too bad to be given to Vigilantius; no comparison too hateful to set forth his impiety. The antagonist of the mild Augustine, of Origen, and, in short, of all who presumed to contradict his oracle, or to speak lightly of his practices, pursued Vigilantius with a luxuriant vituperation, which might be cited as perfect in its kind. But what could be done? There was no Pope as yet, no "holy office," no ecclesiastical police. Spain was independent of Italy, and, as yet, far less corrupt. Even an anathema, *could* it have been launched from Bethlehem, would have dropped into the waters of the great sea, ere it could reach the shores of Iberia; and the zealous witness against rising idolatry was aided in the work of demolition by those who shared his views; and, if they had laboured as hard to save souls as they did to extinguish tapers, and break up reliquaries, Christendom might even then have been kept from the great apostacy. But they did not so, and the issue of the whole is merely this,—that Protestants claim Vigilantius as a confessor of *a portion* of the truths they hold; and Romanists, following the example of their master, load his memory with execration, which, in such a case, may almost pass for praise. With respect to Vigilantius it is also to be observed, that, as he did not attack the doctrine, so much as the practice, of the church, in his day, his position was not so perilous as otherwise it might have been. The edicts of Theodosius against the Arian, Manichean, and other heresies, and

the laws embodied in the Theodosian Code, did not touch his case, although he was branded by his opponents as a heretic; that is to say, a dissident, in the worst and most odious acceptation of the word. These laws cannot be better described than in the compendious and exact language of Llorente, the historian of the Spanish Inquisition. "I shall not stay," he says, "to cite the laws which the Emperors of East and West issued against heretics, as any one may read them in the codes of Theodosius and Justinian, with the additions collected by the commentators, Godefroy and others. I will only say that the result of the whole was to impose, among other penalties, the mark of infamy, privation of offices and honours, incapacity of dignities, confiscation of property, prohibition of making a will, or receiving a bequest, banishment from one's place of abode, and sometimes exile from his country; but never the penalty of death, *except on the Manichees, and in some particular cases;* which particular cases, however, became frequent, as it was pretended that the peace of the empire would be endangered, unless the danger were obviated by making examples of some for warning to the rest. The Emperor Theodosius, in the year 382, first promulgated a law against the Manichees, commanding them to be punished with death, and confiscation of goods, and charging the Prætorian Prefect to create Inquisitors and informers against all such as might be concealed. And here, as Godefroy justly observes, is the first notice of an Inquisition, and of information in matters of heresy; for hitherto it had been only on occasion of the most atrocious crimes that public accusation, which was thought injurious to the empire, was permitted. The successors of Theodosius varied his legal provisions, according to particular circumstances of time and persons. Heretics were chiefly excited to conversion by edicts, being told that if they did not *voluntarily* abjure their heresy, the imperial Judges would proceed against them. Against those who were known to be heretics, and did not abjure voluntarily, *by virtue of the edicts,* proceedings were instituted; but they were still informed, that if they would be converted within a time appointed, they should be reconciled to the church, without any other punishment than canonical penance; and if they showed a disposition to yield, conferences were held with them to persuade them to be convinced." * Legal persecution, however, had not attained to this uniformity of practice so early as the time of Jerome and Vigilantius.

As this century advanced, the quarrel between the Bishops of Constantinople and Rome, each striving for the pre-eminence, became hotter; and Leo "the Great," Bishop of Rome, made himself conspicuous in opposition, not only to his competitor, but to his Sovereign, although the Sovereign of the empire was then acknowledged to be the head of the church. But this contest is too secular and too insignificant to command the pen which has to record such a conflict between the kingdoms of light and darkness as was waged on the shores of Africa, under Genseric and Hunneric, the Vandals. Boniface, Prefect of the province of Africa, disappointed of some promotion

* Llorente, Historia Critica de la Inquisicion de España, cap. i., art. 2.

he had hoped for, invited Genseric, leader of the Vandals, who then occupied the province of Andalusia,* in Spain, to come over to his assistance, for the maintenance of his authority against the natives of the interior, who infested the Roman territory. The barbarian accepted the call; and, in the year 427, crossed the strait of Gibraltar, and landed not fewer than fifty thousand fighting men on the coast of Mauritania, or Morocco. The province being thus occupied, the Vandals—partly heathen and partly Arians, and Genseric himself an Arian, like the Goths, a similar people, converted also in mere appearance, without any influence of the Gospel on their understanding or their heart, and therefore only capable of receiving that humanized form of Christianity which denies the Godhead of the Saviour—sought possession of the churches. Genseric propagated Arianism, too, because it was disapproved at Rome; and he was urged to persecute the orthodox by the Arian Bishops who came over with him, and who desired establishment in the sees. Turning against Boniface, whom he resolved not to succour, but supplant, he laid the country waste, sparing none. Babes were torn from their mothers' bosoms, and either dashed upon the stones, or impaled by the soldiers on their spears, or cleft asunder by their swords. Churches were pillaged and burnt down. The Ministers were put to the torture to discover hidden treasure; and, if any was discovered, tortures were again applied to extort more, or to destroy the victims; or, if nothing was forthcoming, they were aggravated through vexation. Wanton barbarities were perpetrated without any apparent object. They forced open the mouths of some, and choked them with mire. They bound cords on their heads and legs, until the cords rang with extreme tension. Others were forced to swallow salt water, vinegar, and most nauseous liquids, until their state became insufferable, and they were insensible, or died in the hands of their tormentors. Ministers of the church and men of high respectability were made to carry heavy loads, like beasts of burden, and urged on, like them, with goads of iron, until many of them fell, had not strength to rise again, and perished on the roads. Pampinias, Governor of Utica, died, after having had his naked body burnt, from head to foot, with red-hot iron plates; and Mansuetus, a man of rank, was burnt to death in a gate of the city. When they reached Carthage, Genseric commanded that Bishops, and other persons eminent for station and piety, should be stripped, brought out of the churches in a state of nudity, and made slaves. The Bishop of Carthage, Quod-vult-deus, with a large number of Presbyters, was put out to sea in a leaky ship, and they were all drowned, while the Vandals profaned the churches. Edicts were published, that all who had received sacred orders should be put to death, and their bodies buried *in silence*. While these things were going on at Carthage, some of the most reverend Ministers and Doctors who remained repaired in a body to the King, surrendered themselves to him, leaving all they had, both public and private property, and begged him that he would allow them life only, and that among the

* Mariana (Hist., lib. v., cap. 3) says that Bœtica, the province they occupied, was called from them "Vandalosia," and thence "Andalucia."

Vandals. "How," said Genseric, "can you dare to ask so much? I have determined not to leave one of you alive." The interview took place on the sea-shore; and he commanded them to be drowned instantly in his presence. Some of his attendants, touched with compassion, begged for them to be spared, and they were dismissed. They went away sorrowful, celebrated divine worship where and as they could, yet always fleeing for life from place to place; and at last, when they thought they had got beyond the scene of slaughter, if any one of them, when preaching, happened to pronounce the name of Pharaoh, Holofernes, Nebuchadnezzar, or any one who is mentioned in Scripture as a persecutor, he was at once banished for an implied slander on the King. When they had been banished, no one was allowed to take their place; so that there arose a famine of the word of God, except where the people, deprived of their Ministers, comforted and instructed one another. Attempts were made to ordain new Bishops, but were effectually frustrated; and Victor, of Utica, to whom we are indebted for this mournful narrative, says, that of one hundred and sixty-four orthodox Bishops, only three were remaining when he wrote, one of whom—Quintianus—was then a refugee at Edessa. After taking breath for a short time from this carnage, the Vandal Chief commanded a general surrender of everything made use of in religious worship, and especially of the sacred books, hoping, it was thought, more easily to overpower the orthodox, if he could deprive them of the word of God. Valerianus, Bishop of the church of Habessina, finding it hopeless to resist any longer, left that city, that he might not witness the desecration, wandered about houseless, and was soon found dead, an old man, more than eighty years of age. In the village of Reia, a small company of Christians ventured to open a church which had been long shut up, that they might there observe the solemnities of Easter; but an Arian Presbyter fell on them with a band of armed men. The reader fell, transfixed by an arrow, part of the congregation soon lay dying in their gore, and those who escaped for the moment were seized, and, by slow tortures, all were put to death. In another place a Vandal mob broke into a church during the time of communion, and trampled the consecrated elements under foot.

To maintain Arianism intact in the official portion of the state, Genseric imposed a test on all candidates for employment in his service; and those who feared sin more than death, proved their faith in the atoning Saviour by undergoing extreme cruelties. Among these confessors was Armogastus. The cords which bound his head and limbs caused unutterable pain; but, as he lifted up his heart in prayer to the divine Redeemer, the cords broke, and he found instantaneous relief. Other and stronger cords, some even made of horse-hair, were again wound round him; but again he cried to God in his necessity, and the power that released Peter from his chains once more set Armogastus free. He was then suspended by one leg, but seemed free from pain, proof against his tormentors. Theodoric, son of the tyrant, being present, would have beheaded him; but an Arian Presbyter, also standing by, suggested that his life should be taken by some slower method, lest he should be accounted a martyr. He was

therefore sent to hard labour in the field; but, after a short time, brought nearer to Carthage to be a cow-herd, where he might be seen by passers-by. But he had a soul too lofty to be cast down thus; and, after suffering shame for Christ's sake, he sweetly fell asleep in the Lord. Genseric tried a gentler method with one Masculon, offering him great things if he would turn Arian. His faith could not be shaken, and the King commanded him to be put to death. But he secretly ordered the executioner to take his head off, if he waited in silence to receive the stroke; but, if he began to speak, not to kill him then, lest he should be regarded as a martyr,—a witness to the divinity of Christ. But Christ gave him strength to make a prompt confession; so that while preparing to lay down his life in martyrdom, he, in fact, saved it. The royal persecutor now found that he had Christians even in his household, which he began to rid of them in like manner; but, weary and sickened of shedding blood, yet not relenting, he was constrained to relax the persecution, although it only ended with his life.

Hunneric, his son and successor, began his reign with an artful appearance of moderation. At first, that he might get credit for piety,—by so erroneous a standard was piety estimated in that age,—he instituted a severe inquisition of heretics, especially of Manichees; and as many as were discovered he commanded either to be burnt or drowned. Yielding to the request of the Emperor Zeno, he consented that the Catholics * of Carthage should have a Bishop of their own, after having been without one for twenty-four years; but he added the condition, that Arians should also be allowed entire liberty in Constantinople, and the other eastern provinces; and that, if any obstruction were offered to them in the exercise of this liberty, the new Bishop, and all the other Clergy throughout the province of Africa, should be forthwith banished, and driven to the Moors or Berbers, in the interior of the continent. When the Carthaginian church heard this, they said that, under such conditions, they would rather not have a Bishop, but continue still under the oversight of Jesus Christ, who had governed them hitherto. However, a Bishop was set over them,—Eugenius, a good man, who soon became obnoxious to the Arian Priests, and was required, by Hunneric, not to allow any person dressed as a Vandal to enter his church. To this he answered, that the house of God was open for all, and he could not forbid entrance to any. Murderous persecution then broke out again. Men were stationed at the doors with sticks armed with jagged iron, (*palis dentatis*,) to lay hold of the long hair (for such was the Vandal fashion) of those who came to worship. Some had their eyes torn out of the sockets, and women were scalped, and paraded in that condition about the town. All the orthodox who were found in any department of the public service were degraded, and made to work like slaves or convicts. In the seventh year of Hunneric's reign, these atro-

* The word *Catholic* is here used in its original and proper meaning, to denote universal, as opposed to sectarian; and orthodox in the fundamental truths of Christianity, as distinguished from heretical. It has an implied reference, at this period of ecclesiastical history, to the Arian and Manichean controversies.

cities were again renewed at the instigation of Cyrila, an Arian Bishop, who incessantly had it sounded in his ears that his kingdom was in danger, and that nothing could save it but the extirpation of Dissenters. Many of the Dissenters were accordingly transported to Sardinia and Sicily; and in order to give a judicial colouring to those proceedings, the Christian Ministers were falsely accused of unchastity, and innocent females subjected to extreme indignities and tortures, with the hope of extorting something that might serve to criminate them. Not a word escaped their lips that could be made use of to dishonour their persecuted Pastors; but many died in consequence, and others were deformed through life from the injuries they received. At that time nearly five thousand persons were banished into the desert with circumstances of most revolting barbarism. From all parts of the country they were driven like cattle to one place, that there they might hear proposals to accept Arianism, or submit to the alternative of being abandoned to the savage Moors. Some persons of rank addressed the assemblage in terms of bland entreaty; but soft words were not enough to subdue the faith of men who had already endured such fiery trials, and their answer was worthy of their cause. "With a loud cry, and with one consent, they raised their voices, saying, 'We are Christians! We embrace the confession of the universal church,—God one and three!'" That was enough: they were taken to the desert, a vast human herd, and so crowded at the resting-places that their appearance became loathsome, like that of negro slaves on the middle passage. Even the savage Moors sometimes pitied them. They possessed their souls in patience, and took for their by-word, "This honour have all his saints." The recital of their sufferings during this journey is heart-rending. Many aged and sickly people, and children, perished by the way; but none apostatized. Cyprian, Bishop of Uniziba, came to meet them, and gave them words of consolation, and was afterwards banished in consequence. Shortly after this expulsion of the Catholics, Hunneric convened an assembly of Ecclesiastics to discuss the controversy, rejecting, however, the petition of Eugenius, that the summons might also be sent to the provincial churches, banishing some Ministers whose talent was likely to be troublesome to the Arian Doctors, and having a few others flogged, to keep the rest in awe. On the morning of the first day of the Synod, if so it may be called, he had Lætus, a man eminent for piety, burnt alive. The orthodox who appeared there were made to sit apart from the Arians, covered with contempt, and forced to hear a royal edict read, sanctioned, and proclaimed, which was merely a compendium of the imperial edicts put forth from time to time against the Arians, and now, by change of names, turned against themselves. The execution of the edict was in exact agreement with the character of the Synod, and the record of the continued martyrdoms is not less illustrative of diabolical rage on the one hand, and of Christian constancy on the other, than any that preceded. But one event is related so perfectly miraculous, and yet so well attested, that it must be marked as perhaps the last great authentic instance of the kind in the history of the Christian church.

And Gibbon, whose levity, infidelity, and heartless contempt of all who have ever suffered for the sake of Christ, often deprive even truth, in his hands, of its charm and evidence, shall supply the result of his own research,—a reluctant but sufficient witness.

"Tipasa, a maritime colony of Mauritania, sixteen miles to the east of Cæsarea, had been distinguished, in every age, by the orthodox zeal of its inhabitants. They had braved the fury of the Donatists; they resisted, or eluded,* the tyranny of the Arians. The town was deserted on the approach of an heretical Bishop: most of the inhabitants who could procure ships passed over to the coast of Spain; and the unhappy remnant, refusing all communion with the usurper, still presumed to hold their pious, but illegal, assemblies. Their disobedience exasperated the cruelty of Hunneric. A military Count was despatched from Carthage to Tipasa: he collected the Catholics in the Forum, and, in the presence of the whole province, deprived the guilty of their right hands and their tongues. But the holy confessors continued to speak without tongues; and this miracle is attested by Victor, an African Bishop, who published his history of the persecution within two years after the event. 'If any one,' says Victor, 'should doubt of the truth, let him repair to Constantinople, and listen to the clear and perfect language of Restitutus, the Sub-Deacon, one of these glorious sufferers, who is now lodged in the palace of the Emperor Zeno, and is respected by the devout Empress.' At Constantinople we are astonished to find a cool, a learned, and unexceptionable witness, without interest, and without passion. Æneas of Gaza, a Platonic philosopher, has accurately described his own observations on these African sufferers. 'I saw them myself: I heard them speak: I diligently inquired by what means such an articulate voice could be formed without any organ of speech: I used my eyes to examine the report of my ears: I opened their mouth, and saw that the whole tongue had been completely torn away by the roots; an operation which the Physicians generally suppose to be mortal.' The testimony of Æneas of Gaza might be confirmed by the superfluous evidence of the Emperor Justinian, in a perpetual edict; of Count Marcellinus, in his chronicle of the times; and of Pope Gregory the First, who had resided at Constantinople, as the Minister of the Roman Pontiff." † Procopius, also, who is acknowledged by Gibbon in a note, testifies that he had seen these persons in the streets of Constantinople talking without any inconvenience.‡

Drought and famine succeeded to the horrors of persecution; after famine a great mortality, until the dead were too numerous to be buried by the exhausted survivers; and, lastly, Hunneric himself ended his days in lingering and painful disease, induced, as it would seem, by constitutional decay. The force of true religion which had enabled the African church to resist the protracted persecution

* "Or eluded," is a gratuitous addition, an example of the flippancy with which this writer manages on every page to insinuate what he has not the courage plainly to affirm.

† Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, chap. 37.

‡ Procopius De Bell. Vandal., lib. 1., cap. 8.

now compendiously described, might have excited the reasonable hope that Northern Africa would become one of the happiest countries in the world; that the prayers of so many faithful men would have been answered, and their example blessed, to the eventual revival of vital Christianity: but the lamp of doctrine was extinguished; the Ministers of truth were killed or banished; the multitudes were too ignorant, depressed, and scattered, to restore the means of grace among themselves; then also the Vandals rapidly declined, and with them even the name of Christianity passed away from that part of the world. And throughout the Roman empire, orthodoxy, excellent as it is, was substituted for life: right opinions were contended for; but right experience and right practice were forgotten. Councils, as at Ephesus, at Chalcedon, and at Constantinople, were convened to settle the differences of divided Christendom, differences often in reality no greater than varieties of opinion that now arise and pass away in religious society without notice, because they rather relate to words than things. Worldly passions embittered theologic hate, and reasons of party and impulses of ambition corrupted the purity even of men who had some zeal for the maintenance of fundamental truth, but endeavoured to sustain truth and put down error by dint of authority and force, instead of seeking the influences of the Holy Spirit, who alone can effectually teach the disciples of the Saviour.

CHAPTER IV.

Not all the Slain are Martyrs—Confusion of the Secular and the Spiritual—The Britons—Persecution in Armenia, and Religious War—Renewed Persecution in Africa—Massacre of Christians in Arabia—War between Justinian and Chosroes—The Lombards—Hermenegild, the Rebel, canonized—Chosroes II. takes Jerusalem—The Mussulmans also take Jerusalem—Constantine-Sylvanus and the Paulicians—Phocas and Boniface III.—The Monks of Bangor—State of Europe in the EIGHTH *Century—Persecution in the East—In Spain—Gotteschalchus—State of the Church in the* NINTH *Century—Claudius of Turin—Pseudo-Martyrs of the* TENTH *Century—Adalbert of Prague—Sylvester II.—Canons of Orleans—Christianity rejected in Hungary—Ordeals—Propagandists of the* ELEVENTH *Century—First Crusade—England—Hakem, Father of the Druses—Intellectual movement in the* TWELFTH *Century—Speculations—Foulques de Neuilly—Heretics—Conduct of the Church towards Heretics—Albigenses—Councils of Lateran and Verona—Judgment of an enlightened Romanist respecting the Persecutions of those Times—Jews—Resistance to Ecclesiastical Power—Second Crusade—Third Crusade—Fourth Crusade—Military Orders—Condition of Christians in the East—Waldo and the Waldenses—Prohibition of Prayer in vernacular Languages.*

THE ecclesiastical historian must endeavour to distinguish between war and persecution. Religious, sectarian, and national antipathies were often so mingled, that it is not easy to ascertain the dominant principle, or to determine whether the victims of the conflict are to be honoured with the name of "martyrs," or left unmentioned amongst the millions who have perished in unholy warfare. The decision cannot be attained by conjecture; and in the absence of satisfactory evidence, no

doubtful names will be admitted into the subsequent chapters of this martyrology, except sometimes, for the sake of illustrating the dominant spirit of the church, or of the times.

The source of this uncertainty is chiefly to be found in the early, and at length the inveterate, confusion of the secular and the sacred, of the world and the church; so that the quarrels of the one were identified with the controversies of the other. We have already seen the first Christian Emperor—if, indeed, he could be justly called "Christian," when both unbaptized and unregenerate—presiding over the affairs of the church of Christ. But the church acquiesced in, and even courted, this interference; and never more so than in the fifth century, the period at which we have now arrived. Leo the Great, for example, Bishop of Rome, although thwarted in his controversy with the Bishop of Constantinople, who was favoured by the ruler of the Eastern empire, desired that the royal authority should defend the church *in matters pertaining to divine confession;* * and Ambrose reminded Valentinian III., that his father had not only sanctioned religion in word, but by laws also.† The codes of Theodosius and Justinian made the law of the empire to be that of the church; and the same sanction upheld the profession of evangelical truth, and made heresy illegal. Discontented vassals of the Roman see have often cited this general fact as a precedent to justify their recourse for protection to the temporal power; and in several modern states, the Prince or Magistrate has actually resumed the exercise of this external discipline: but, leaving altogether the important questions which have been agitated until the present day, in consequence of the collision of the temporal and spiritual powers, our only business is to observe the mischief to the Christian world which resulted from their confusion. The enemies of the empire were generally the enemies of the church. If they were merely Pagans, the church in their eye was the assemblage of all who bore the Christian name; or, if they were proselyted barbarians who had not received the faith of the New Testament, but the corrupt doctrine known as Arianism, the orthodox, or Catholics, became the objects of their twofold enmity.

The Vandal persecution in Africa has been described. Their expedition into that province was by invitation of a discontented Governor; their hostile position was taken merely for the sake of conquest, adding treachery towards Count Boniface to enmity towards his master; but, after they had obtained possession of the country, by relentless oppression and slaughter of the orthodox, they showed that their hatred was that of sectarian bigotry; and the facts narrated are evidence to justify the classification of the sufferers with Christian martyrs.

The martyrs in Persia, in the fourth century, were, at the same time, victims of political and pagan hatred. On this island, on

* "Quæ ad divinam confessionem pertinent, et regia..... defendat auctoritas." (Leo. Mag., Epist. ad Pulcher. August.)

† "Non solum sermone respondit, sed etiam legibus sanxit." (Ambros., Ep. xxxii., ad Valentin.)

the contrary, the Britons were not harassed by the Picts and Scots, as might be inferred from the statements of our great Martyrologist, John Foxe,* because they were Christians, but only for the sake of plunder. During those incursions there does not seem to have been any religious persecution, for the barbarians cared for nothing more than booty; but when the cowardly Britons were delivered from that scourge, these began to persecute their pious brethren. "When the ravages of the enemy at length ceased, the island began to abound with such plenty of grain as had never been known in any age before. With plenty, luxury increased; and this was immediately attended with all sorts of crimes; in particular, cruelty, hatred of truth and love of falsehood, insomuch that if any one among them happened to be milder than the rest, and inclined to truth, all the rest abhorred and persecuted him, as if he had been the enemy of his country. Nor were the laity only guilty of these things," (these are the words of Bede,) "but even our Lord's own flock, and his Pastors, also, addicting themselves to drunkenness, animosity, litigiousness, contention, envy, and other such like crimes, and casting off the light yoke of Christ."† Again "the northern nations," as the same historian calls them, renewed their depredations; and the Saxons, whom the natives invited to their aid, also turned their arms against them: and then, when "public as well as private structures were destroyed, the Priests everywhere slain before the altars, and the Prelates and people, without any respect of persons, destroyed with fire and sword;" ‡ the indiscriminate slaughter could not be regarded as a martyrdom, but rather as a righteous retribution in penalty of prevalent ungodliness.

But it was far otherwise in the distant East. The misguided zeal of a Christian Bishop, who caused a fire-temple to be demolished in Armenia, had, indeed, provoked the worshippers to persecution. Sapor, the first Persian Sovereign of that country, amply avenged the wrong; but the Magi could not forgive it, and their violence broke forth again in the year 441, in the reign of Izdegerd II., without any immediate provocation. An Armenian historian furnishes a distinct narrative, which may be preferred to less certain accounts collected by Socrates; and we borrow it in Mr. Neumann's translation. "Yasgerd (Izdegerdes) belonged to the accomplices of Satan; he sent forth his accumulated venom, and offered it as a useful and deceptive remedy. And the horn of iniquity began to sound, and the mighty cloud of dust spread over all the four quarters of the earth. The hater and adversary of all believers in Christ appeared; he persecuted and tortured the Christians, and took from them their guiltless lives; for his delight was in desolation and bloodshed; wherefore he constantly thought how he might fully vent the bitterness of his venom, and whither he might shoot the multitude of his arrows. With immoderate fury he fell, like a wild beast, on the country of the Greeks, pressed on as far as the city of Midspin, laid waste sundry provinces of the Romans,

* Acts and Monuments, book II.

† Bede's Ecclesiastical History, chap. xiv., edited by Giles.

‡ Ibid., chap. xv.

and, after pulling down the churches, dragged the booty and prisoners after him, filling all the troops in the land with fear and trembling. Now the excellent Emperor Theodosius, (the younger,) being a great lover of peace in Christ, would not give battle to the enemy, but sent his General for the East, Anatolius by name, to meet him, with much treasure. Those Persians who, by reason of their Christian belief, had fled and found refuge in the imperial city, were assembled and delivered into the hands of the King; and all things required by him were acceded to. By this submission he was prevailed upon to stay his further progress, and to return to his city Dispon (Ctesiphon, on the Tigris, opposite to Seleucia). As fire increases by the addition of fuel, so began the unbelieving Prince to meditate something further, when he saw that his iniquity was successful. Knowing now that he was secure, and that all danger of opposition was removed, he proceeded to turn all from the holy faith; some with mere threats, others with dungeons and chains. If any one died under persecution, he seized on his property, personal and real; and acted in all things with the grossest injustice. He suspended misery over the whole land. He called his officers of state together in council; and all who were attached to idolatry by indissoluble bonds, burned like a flaming furnace against the belief of the holy church." His first measures, however, were cautious: he did little more than impose new burdens on his Armenian subjects, and levy conscriptions on them for war against some Scythian tribes; but at length, "when the King saw that the Romans remained true to the treaty that they had concluded with him, and that peace reigned through all his dominions, he sent the joyful tidings to all the fire-temples in his kingdom; he brought fat oxen and long-haired animals in numbers to the holy fire, as a burnt-offering; and was, besides, incessantly employed in performing his impure idolatry. He honoured the Magi, more particularly the *Mogbeds*,* with crowns and other marks of distinction. He then issued an order for depriving the Christians of the goods and property which they possessed in Persia." A succession of oppressive acts followed in execution of this iniquitous order: the Christians were placed under the jurisdiction of those *Mogbeds* who were invested with all the prerogatives of high state-functionaries; and his Grand Vizier issued a proclamation against them, containing a sort of confession of faith of Magianism, and a remarkable, but by no means singular, injunction: "Be mindful, that whatsoever faith your Sovereign holds, the same must you also receive, especially for this reason, *that we have to render an account of you to God!*" Thus, while the Priests of Constantinople and Rome were hotly disputing which of them should be the greater, and were only hindered from setting themselves up as gods by the superior temporal power of their respective coun-

* The Magi were Priests, and the *Mogbeds* Chief Priests. "The first and most ancient order of the Persian priesthood was the *Mogh*, or *Múgh*, that is, *Magus*. Over the ordinary Magi of those times, there was a superior order, each member of which was called *Múgh-bad*, or chief of the Magi." They were, in fact, the Prelates of the royal religion of ancient Persia. (Hyde, Historia Religionis veterum Persarum, cap. xxx.)

tries, the crowned fire-Prelates of Persia, headed by a Supreme Pontiff, at once Priest of the Sun and King of men, were elate in the enjoyment of a spiritual despotism which was caught up by the semi-pagan hierarchy of the West, about the same time that it passed away from them. The Armenian Clergy held a council in the royal city of Artaxata,* to consider the proclamation; and an answer to it was drawn up in the name of Joseph, Bishop of Ararat, and his brethren. Izdegerd, infuriated at this opposition, summoned to his court the most distinguished of the Armenian Princes; commanded them to worship the sun; and swore by that god, that if on the morrow they did not so, he would inflict the most cruel vengeance on them, their families, and their country. They were preparing for death rather than apostacy, when a renegade from Christianity, who fancied that by retaining a sort of secret faith in Christ his guilt would be covered, advised them to dissemble also. They returned laden with Persian honours, but, in the eyes of their countrymen, with everlasting disgrace. A large army followed, bringing seven hundred Magi, to teach the Armenians their system; and many, both Priests and people, submitted to profess Magianism. The Persians broke open and desecrated the churches; and the Armenians, headed by their Bishops, prepared justifiable resistance, and, rising in the mass, attacked the strong-holds of their enemies, and drove them from the land. "They destroyed the places, and carried away the men and women, together with their property and possessions, treasures and riches, into captivity. They pulled down and laid waste their dwellings, and burned their houses of idolatry,—the houses for the worship of fire. They removed the horrors of false worship; and taking the utensils away from the fire-temples, they placed them in the holy churches, where they were consecrated by the Priests to be ornaments to the altar of the Lord. Instead of the idolatry which had been performed in all the heathenish places, they now set up the cross of Christ the Redeemer; they purified all the holy altars, established holy and life-giving principles, and appointed Priests and Curates; and, in all the land, gave themselves up to steadfast hope." This hope, however, was not exclusively placed in God. They were involved in war; were not satisfied with a position of defence; many of their brethren had apostatized, instead of awaiting deliverance in faithful prayer; and they sent to the Emperor Theodosius to implore his help, in order to withstand the vengeance which their temporary victory could not but provoke. Theodosius, however, was killed by a fall from his horse, shortly after the arrival of the envoys at Constantinople; and his successor, Marcian, so far from helping them, immediately entered into a close alliance with the Persian Sovereign, willingly stipulating to withdraw all succour from the distressed Armenians. The motive to this desertion was his abhorrence of the doctrines of Nestorius, which they had received, or, at least, had not rejected. For several years the Armenian soil was almost incessantly wet with blood: in one great battle 1,036 Christians were reported to have fallen, and so

* The present *Ardisher*, or *Ardaschat*, but more probably the latter.

had 3,544 of their foes; but the defeat was theirs, in the death of Vartan their leader. At last, although invited by a proclamation to return to the peaceful cultivation of the country, the Christians, dreading the sway of the treacherous Vasag, successor of Izdegerd, "quitted their homes, their cities, and boroughs; the bride left her couch, and the bridegroom his chamber; the old abandoned their chairs, and the infants their mothers' breasts; the youths and maidens, and all the men and women, arose and fled to inaccessible fastnesses, and to impregnable places among the mountains. To them," if the historian has not overwrought the picture, "a life led like that of the wild beasts in caves, with the fear of God, seemed better than comfort in their dwellings, if purchased with apostacy. Without murmuring, they lived upon herbs, and forgot their accustomed flesh-meals; the caves they considered like the chambers of their lofty dwellings, and the subterranean abodes like their ornamented halls. The songs which they sang were Psalms, and they read the sacred Scriptures with a perfect joy. Each was to himself a church, each was to himself a Priest; their bodies served them for the holy altar, and their souls were the offering. No one mourned despairingly for those executed by the sword; nor were any greatly troubled for their nearest friends. With peace of soul they suffered the loss of all their goods, and it never occurred to their recollection that they had once possessed them. Patiently they endured all fatigues, and met every attack with great valour, although they looked forward to no joyful hope, and had no means of accomplishing any great feat of arms; for the greater number of their most distinguished Princes, their brothers, sons and daughters, with many of their friends, were scattered in various places of security. Some were in the gloomy land of the Chaldeans; many others in the southern provinces, in the unapproachable fastnesses of the Dmorians; a part were in the dense forests of Ardsakh, while others lived in the central parts of the country, in various mountain-castles. All bore their sufferings with much patience, fixing their hopes on God, and only imploring of him that he might not suffer them to witness the fall of the holy church."* Nor did they. The Persian King was obliged to cease from all effort to coerce them into Magianism, and to grant them perfect religious liberty. Having obtained this liberty, they had a synod in the year 491, rejected the decrees of the tumultuary Council of Chalcedon, held under the authority of Marcian, and became subject to the charge of heresy from the Latin and Greek churches.

We now enter on the *sixth century*. In consequence of the disintegration of the Western empire, those provinces of Christendom which once lay within its boundaries, are now uncovered to the attacks of barbarian violence; the Roman eagle no longer protects the follower of Jesus; and he must learn how vain, at last, is the help of man. The Vandal Chief, whose persecution of the Catholics in Africa was last related, was succeeded by another who treated them with kind-

* History of Vartan, in Introduction to Smith and Dwight's Missionary Researches in Armenia.

ness. Under the reign of Guntimund, their churches were re-opened and repaired, the exiles permitted to return, Pastors again ordained over the long-scattered flocks, and worship restored. Eugenius, the faithful Bishop of Carthage, had influence over Guntimund, and engaged him to recall the Bishops banished by his predecessor. The work of restoration had steadily advanced during a reign of twelve years; and the African diocesses might have presented the singular spectacle of ecclesiastical prosperity under the mild sway of a Vandal and Arian Monarch, had not death terminated his reign, leaving the vacant throne to his brother Thrasimund, who was saluted King in September, A.D. 496. To avoid, perhaps, a sudden change from mildness to severity, which would have provoked even his Arian subjects into disaffection, he began to offer places, promotions, money, and exemptions, as the price of defection from orthodoxy. Thence advancing to bolder measures, he prohibited the ordination of Bishops to vacant sees. Roused into resistance by this unrighteous prohibition, the entire episcopate resolved to fill up vacancies regardless of it, trusting that the reason of the case, and their peaceable demeanour, would moderate his displeasure; or, if not, that the new Bishops, associated with themselves, would succeed in encouraging the people to brave persecution again, rather than surrender the liberty of the church, and to prefer the crown of martyrdom to life spent under the sway of an enemy of the truth. Ministers and people united with enthusiastic haste to ordain Presbyters, and then to raise them to the episcopal office, until the kingdom was furnished with them more abundantly than at any time since the landing of Genseric; but the Sovereign could command forces that were not to be resisted, and an extensive banishment was the consequence, Victor, the historian of the persecutions, being the first embarked. In the year 505, sixty Bishops are said to have been torn from their flocks in the province of Byzacena alone; and from the whole kingdom two hundred and twenty.* From this blow the African church never recovered; and it has been reserved to our times to evangelize the northern part of that continent, where purity of doctrine, and independence of discipline, were, for a time, so faithfully maintained.

Passing from Africa to the neighbouring continent, we there find an unquestionable example of true Christian martyrdom, not sullied by any mixture of sectarian or political passion in the sufferers. Arabia *yemen*, or "happy Arabia," was at that time tributary to the Sovereign of Ethiopia, a Christian King; and the Homerites, as they are usually called, received their ruler by the appointment of the powerful Monarch who reigned at Axum.† By circumstances which will appear in the narrative now to be related, Dhu Nowás, otherwise called Dunaan, a Jew, or Jewish proselyte, managed to get into the throne, and, actuated by twofold hatred, of the Christians and of the Romans, and perhaps thinking, like Saul of Tarsus, that he was doing

* Fleury, Hist. Eccles., xxxi., 57, 61.

† By laborious examination of Ethiopic inscriptions, compared with other ancient records, Henry Salt, Esq., in his "Travels in Abyssinia," has thrown clear light on this historical fact, and on the first part of the Syrian narrative. See his Travels, chap. x.

God a service, slaughtered his unoffending subjects without pity. Simeon, Bishop of Beth Arsam, in Persia, (the Arsamopolis of the Greeks,) was sent by the Emperor Justin with proposals of peace, to Monder, a King of the Scenite Arabs, and during that embassy obtained the information, which he immediately communicated, by letter, to Simeon, Abbot of Gabula, a town on the banks of the Euphrates. Assemann has published this letter, if not from the autograph, at least from a very ancient copy; and, as it will be quite new to the English reader, it shall be translated here literally and without abridgment.* "We must inform your benevolence, that on the 20th day of last Conún (January) of the present year, 835, (of the Greeks, and A.D. 524,) we left the territory of Naamon, with Abraham the Presbyter, the son of Euphrasius, who was sent by the Emperor Justin to Monder, King of the Arabs, to negotiate peace. And, as we wrote concerning him in our first epistle, both we and all the faithful acknowledged his goodness in taking part with us; and he is aware of what we wrote, as well as of what we are now writing. By the desert, then, travelling for ten days towards the south-east, we reached Monder, encamped opposite the Sandy Mountains, as we call them, by the Arabs known as the *Ramle*. When we entered the camp of Monder, we were met by heathen Arabs, and people from the sea-coast, who addressed us thus: 'What will ye do now that your Messiah is expelled from the borders of the Romans, the Persians, and the Homerites?' Thus did the Arabs jeer us. But we stood silent with the excessive grief which seized us, especially when a messenger came with a letter from the King of the Homerites to King Monder, full of arrogance, and written after this tenor:—

"'Be it known to thee, my brother, King Monder, that the King whom the Ethiopians placed in our land, died. And the season of winter came, but no Ethiopians had arrived to appoint a Christian King according to their custom, so that I reign over all the country of the Homerites. And, first of all, I laid hold on all the Christians who believe in the Messiah, and threatened them with death, unless they would become Jews like us. Then I slew two hundred and eighty Priests that were found, and some Ethiopians who kept a church; and their church I converted into a synagogue for ourselves. And then, with one hundred and twenty thousand men, I marched upon Nagran, *(Negra,)* their royal city; and, having sat down before it some days without being able to take it, gave them an oath, which, however, I did not intend to keep with Christians, my enemies. So I commanded them to give up their gold and silver and treasures, which they brought to me, and I received. Then I asked for Paul, their Bishop, and they told me he had died; but I did not believe them, until they had showed me his sepulchre, and I took out his bones and burnt them. Their church, too, and their Priests, and as many as I found taking refuge in the church, I consumed with fire; but endeavoured to compel the remainder to deny the Messiah and the cross, which they would not do; *but made their confession that*

* Assem., Biblioth. Oriental., cap. i., p. 364, *et seq.*

he is God, and the Son of the blessed One, and rather chose to die. And their Chief, too, (Arethas,) said many things against me, and spake insolently: therefore I commanded all their chief men to be put to death. And I had their wives brought, and commanded them to deny (Christ), when they had seen the death of their husbands for the Messiah, and to have pity on their sons and their daughters. They would not consent; but complained that virgins had been killed in preference to them; and the wives of the chief men threw themselves upon their husbands, and said that they ought to die with them. So they were all killed, except Rumai, wife of him who was to have been their King, whom I would not allow to die; but urged her to deny the Messiah, that her daughters and her wealth might be spared, and she become a Jewess. We even commanded her to go and be made Queen; for the guards of our army were waiting to do her honour. But she went away, clad, as she was, in sackcloth, with her royal tiara, and her face uncovered, a woman that since her childhood had not been seen in public by a man, (but had worn a veil, according to the universal custom,) and, lifting up her voice, she cried aloud: 'Women of Nagran, my sisters, Christians and Jewesses and Heathens, hear me. You know me to be a Christian; you know my family and my descent, and that I have gold and silver, and men-slaves and women-slaves, and money and revenue, and that my husband is now slain for the sake of Christ. If I desired another husband, I could offer him forty thousand pieces of gold, and great store of jewels of gold and silver, and pearls, and precious garments, besides my husband's treasures. You well know that I speak not falsely. And you well know that there is no day more joyful to a woman than the day of her wedding-feast; but after this come sorrows, the pains of child-bearing, and then anguish at the death and burial of her children. From this day forward, therefore, I have no more of these things. Joyful was I on the first day of my marriage, and now with gladness I have betrothed my five virgin daughters adorned unto Christ. Look on me, my sisters, look on me again. For, as you saw me on my first marriage carried to the house of my husband, so now you see me going home to Christ my Lord, my Master, and my God, who humbled himself for our sin, and suffered for us. I renounce all these things, for I need them no longer; I no more need beauty, nor thereby will I be corrupted to deny him to these Jews; but it shall witness for me before the Lord, that none can seduce me to the sin of denying Him to save my life. Far be it from me, far be it from me, my sisters, that I should deny Christ my God in whom I trust. I and my daughters were baptized in the name of the holy Trinity, and I adore the cross,* and for it will I gladly die, I and my daughters, even as He suffered in the flesh for

* Here is superstition mingled with true piety; but the event has shown that superstition naturally degenerates into idolatry, which continues after piety has decayed. We must, however, observe, that there is no evidence of idolatrous adoration of the crucifix in all this narrative, and that the Jewish usurper does not charge the Christians with worshipping the image of Christ, which he would certainly have noticed if such an object had been exhibited at Negra, and approached with reverence like that now rendered by the Papists.

us. I leave all that is desirable to the eye, and pleasant to the body, and depart hence. Happy are ye, my sisters, if you hear me, and follow my words, and acknowledge the truth, and love Christ our God, for whom I and my daughters die. And now, peace and quiet be to the people of God. The blood of these my brothers and sisters that are slain for Christ, shall be to this city for a wall, if it trust in Christ my Lord. See, that with my face unveiled I quit this city, where I have been as in a temporary lodging-place, and go with my daughters to the eternal city, where they shall find the Spouse to whom I have delivered them. Pray for me, my sisters, that Christ the Lord may receive me, and be gracious to me; for I have waited three days after my husband.' And when we heard,' continues Dhu Nowás, 'the sound of great lamentation in the city, we asked the messengers whom we had sent, and who were now returning, what meant that unusual clamour; and they related to us what we have now written, saying that Rumai went out into the city, followed by women, her companions, whom she encouraged, raising an outcry in the city; the forbearance of the guards allowing what they would only have permitted in a woman; and we should therefore have put them to death, if the entreaties of some had not mitigated our anger. And, behold, the woman herself came out of the city with her head bare, and leading her daughters, elegantly attired, as if they were going to the marriage-chamber, and stood erect in our presence. Then, holding aside her dishevelled locks, she laid bare her neck, and cried, 'We are Christians; we die for Christ. Take off my head, and send me quickly to my brothers and sisters, and to the father of my daughters.' But notwithstanding the great folly of the woman, I still endeavoured to persuade her to deny Christ, or at least not to say that he is God. But I could not persuade her, and one of her daughters began to reproach me for speaking thus. When, therefore, I was certain that the woman would not be induced by any force or any art to deny the Messiah, then, in order to strike terror into the other Christians, I commanded her to be thrown on the ground, and her daughters to be held over her, and their throats cut, so that the blood flowed on her face, and had her killed last of all. I swear by *Adonai*, (God,) that I am exceedingly sorry when I think of the great beauty of the woman and her daughters. However, because it appears both to our Priests and to me, that innocent children should not be punished for the sins of their parents, which, indeed, our laws forbid, I therefore published a decree that the young children should be taken care of by our soldiers, and when they come to be of sufficient age, they shall either embrace the Jewish religion, or, if they prefer the Christian, shall be put to death. These things I have thought well to write to thee, O King, and at the same time to advise thee not to let any Christians live in thy kingdom unless they will change their religion for thine; but continue, brother, to treat the Jews, my brethren, with the same kindness thou hast always shown to them, for which I thank thee, and expect a letter to assure me that these thanks are accepted.'

"So wrote the wicked Jewish King to Monder. And, after we

had come thither, Monder called together his army, and commanded the King's letter to be read to them, and the messenger attested that it was true, adding more concerning the slaughter of the Christians, and their flight from the country of the Homerites. Then Monder, addressing the Christians, of whom there were many in his army, said, 'You hear what has happened: will you now deny Christ? For I am no better than other Kings that have expelled the Christians.' Then a Christian soldier of the army courageously answered, and said to the King, 'We were not made Christians at thy age, O King, that we should now deny Christ.' To whom Monder said in anger, 'Dost thou prate thus in my presence?' 'When I have to speak in the fear of God,' replied the soldier, 'no man shall compel me to be silent. My sword is not shorter than others, and I am not afraid to fight to death.' Monder was silent, awed by the noble spirit of the man, who was known for valour among the Captains in battle.

"And when we returned to the land of Naamon, which we reached on the first Sabbath of the fast, we found there a messenger of the deceased King of the Homerites, who, when he learnt from us the slaughter committed by the tyrant of the Jews, hired a man of Naamon, and sent him with all speed to the city of Nagran, to ascertain, with the utmost care, all that had taken place. This man afterwards related to the Christian messenger, in our hearing, all that we have told, and added that there were slain, on the same occasion, three hundred and forty chief men who came out of the city to meet the tyrant. He also added that the Jew insulted Caleb the son of Arethas, their Prince, and the husband of Rumai, in these words: 'See what thy faith in the Messiah has brought thee to, by making war against me. Now, wretch, repent, and deny Christ: consider thy old age, lest thou perish with thy companions.' To whom Arethas: 'I only repent that I gave no heed to those who advised me not to trust thee. I said, indeed, that we should stay in the city, and not heed thy sayings, but settle the matter with arms, not words; that Christ would finish the war for us, and that, having abundant supplies, we should hold out; but they determined otherwise, deceived by thee. I therefore think thee unworthy of the name of King, and call thee rather a deceiver. For Kings, of whom I have seen many, keep their engagements, and hate tricks and fraud. But I keep my faith with Christ, and will not become a Jew, an apostate, like thyself. And I well know that life and death are not in my power: I have lived long enough already, and leave many children and grandchildren; and, Christ helping me, have won great fame both in peace and war. As for the future, my hope is not doubtful, but sure, that as the vine yields more grapes when the superfluous shoots are pruned away, so shall our Christian people in this city be more numerous, and the church which thou hast burned be restored more magnificently. The Christian religion, too, shall reign with renewed power; it shall subdue Kings; the sect of Jews shall be covered in darkness; thy kingdom shall fall, and thy people shall perish. Boast not of thy deed; for in boasting thou shalt come to nought.' Thus

spake the great and venerable old man, Arethas; and then, addressing the Christians who surrounded him, he said: 'Do you hear, brethren, what I have witnessed to this Jew?' They answer, 'Yes, father.' 'Is it true, or no?' 'True,' said they. 'If any one here is afraid, and thinks of casting off his faith in Christ, let him go his way.' Here, with a loud cry, they all exclaimed, 'God forbid that we should be afraid, father: we will all die with thee for Christ; none of us will leave thee.' Then Arethas, addressing the mixed multitude of Christians, Jews, and Pagans: 'Hear,' said he: 'if any one of mine falls away from Christ, and follows that Jew, I disown him, I disinherit him; and I will that my goods be used for building a church. But if any one of mine keeps faith towards Christ, and his life be preserved, I bequeath to him my property, and declare him to be my heir; but whomsoever the church shall elect, let him have the three estates which are my patrimony, and keep the building in repair. And as for thee,' said he, turning to the King, 'thee, and whosoever have rejected Christ, do I reject, abjure, deny. Behold, we stand before thee.' And his companions, taking courage, cried, 'Behold, Abraham, chief of the fathers, welcomes thee, and us with thee: whoever leaves thee, and denies Christ, is by Him denied.'

"Then the tyrant commanded that they should all be taken to a river, and there killed, and their bodies thrown into the stream. Arethas raised his hands towards heaven, and said: 'O Christ our God, come to our help, and give us strength, and receive our souls; precious to thee be the blood of thy servants shed in thy cause: set us in thy presence, and confess us before thy Father, as thou hast promised, and let thy church be builded, and let there be a Bishop in this city in place of thy servant Paul, whose bones were burned.' Then they gave each other the kiss of peace; and Arethas the aged made the sign of the cross over them,* and presented his head first to the sword. And his companions ran together with joy, were sprinkled with his blood, and were all martyred.

"There was a child five years old, whom his mother, as she was going to be put to death, led by the hand. Seeing the King sitting, and clothed in his royal garments, he left his mother, ran to him, and kissed his knees; and the King took him and caressed him, and said, 'Which wilt thou do, my child,—go and die with thy mother, or stay with me?' 'I must go to my mother: I want to die with her; for she said to me, Come, my son, we are going to die for Christ. But let me go: I must go to my mother, or she will die, and I shall not see her; for she tells me that the King of the Jews has commanded that all who will not deny Christ shall die; but I will not deny Him.'

* Where an external mark, a stigma, a phylactery, or a form of words pronounced, or a sign made, is the signal of a distinct religious profession, as in many countries of the East, to make the sign of the cross may be an innocent and proper custom. But where it is not usual to make such outward signals of confession, or where the signing has been associated with pretensions to some mysterious or magical power, it may become expedient to avoid the action, however harmless in itself. The word used in the text of this letter precisely answers to the Hebrew חתם—and signifies to "seal," or "confirm," because the profession of the Christian faith was confirmed by the person making the sign. The custom is purely Oriental. For our part, we are quite satisfied to be "living epistles, known and read of all men," and need no better sign.

Then said the King, 'Where hast thou known Christ?' 'Every day,' said the child, 'I see him in the church, when I go there with my mother.' 'Which dost thou love best,' said the King, 'me or thy mother?' 'My mother, to be sure,' said he. 'Then dost thou love Christ or me best?' 'I love Christ better than thee.' 'Then why didst thou kiss my knees?' 'I thought thou wast the King of the Christians that I have seen in the church; I did not know that thou wast a Jew.' 'But I will give thee nuts and almonds and figs.' 'O no,' said the child; 'I will not eat Jews' nuts; but let me go, I must go to my mother.' 'Stay with me,' said the King, 'and thou shalt be my son.' 'I will not,' said the child: 'thou smellest badly, not sweet like my mother.' Then said the King to them that were standing by, 'See what a bad race this is: the Messiah perverts them from their infancy.' Then one of the chief men spoke to the child: 'Come with me, and I will take thee to be the Queen's son.' 'O no,' said he, 'my mother is better to me than the Queen; for she takes me to church.' When he found they were holding him fast, he bit the King on his thigh, and cried out, 'Let me go, thou wicked Jew: I must go to my mother, and die with her.' But the King gave him to one of the chief men, and commanded him to be taught until he should be grown up; and then, if he denied the Messiah, he should live; but if not, should die. As a servant was taking him away, he struggled hard to escape, and called to his mother: 'O my mother, come, help me, and I will go with thee to the church.' The mother answered him, 'Go, now, my son; trust in Christ; weep not: wait for me in the church with Christ until I come.' And as she was speaking, they beheaded her.

"When these things were known, both by letters and reports, all the Christians in these parts were filled with grief; and we have thought well to relate them to you, that the holy and faithful Bishops may know what has happened to the Homerite Christians, and make a memorial of the holy martyrs. We entreat you to communicate this to the heads of monasteries, and the Bishops, and especially to the Bishop of Alexandria, that he may exhort the King of Ethiopia to send help to the Homerites. And you will also endeavour that the Chief Priests of the Jews at Tiberias write to this Jewish King, and urge him to abstain in future from persecuting the Homerites."

Caleb, the Ethiopian King, called by the Greeks Elesbaas, on hearing of the usurpation and cruelties of the Jew, went over into Arabia with a powerful army, gained a signal victory; and Dunaan is said by the Arabian historians to have ridden into the sea in despair after the battle, and drowned himself. The massacre of the Christians of Negra was long remembered with horror: incidents not related in the letter of Simeon were also made the subject of traditional tales: one of them, the burning of a large number of Christians in a pit, was marked with especial detestation; and about a century afterwards, Mohammed made reference to it in a chapter of his Koran, where we now read these remarkable sentences: "Cursed were the contrivers of the pit, of fire supplied with fuel, when they sat round the same, and were witnesses of what they did against the true believers. And

they afflicted them for no other reason, but because they believed in the mighty, the glorious God, unto whom belongeth the kingdom of heaven and earth; and God is witness of all things. Verily, for those who persecute the true believers of either sex, and afterwards repent not, is prepared the torment of hell, and they shall suffer the pain of burning." * According to Mohammed, then, the Christians were true believers; and it is also worthy of remembrance that, although he would make war on Christians as well as others for the extension of his own sect, deference to a common feeling of humanity constrained even him to declare against the dastardly atrocity of those who would not dare to fight in open field, but could destroy the defenceless and unoffending.

In the neighbouring kingdom of Persia, the Christians were again subject to severe persecution, not, however, on account of religion only. The Grecian and the Persian empires were now the two principal political powers of the known world, they were contiguous along a considerable extent of frontier, and were governed by eminent and ambitious Sovereigns. Justinian, the Greek, was earnest in his attachment to Christianity, but bigoted, and intimately possessed with the prevalent idea that it devolved on him to govern the church as well as the empire. Chosroes, on the other hand, (or Nushirvan,) was also a zealot for Magianism, was not at all inferior to Justinian in ostentation of justice, honoured by his subjects with the appellation, "Just," and again honoured by posterity with a place among the ten sages of Persia, with the praise of wisdom receiving also that of justice. Both those men were ambitious and powerful; perhaps both were vain; and in the relative position of their respective dominions, even if there had been no reasons for mutual disgust, they would have found it difficult to maintain a cordial understanding. But each of them was at the head of a hierarchy opposed to the other by reason of the impassable barrier of truth or error. Two such Monarchs could not disagree merely as civil rulers; and, independently of their religious opposition, various incidents, which it belongs to the secular historian to relate, kept them at variance during almost the entire period of their contemporary reigns. The Christians in Persia then lost the benefit of previous treaties in which their interests had been considered; were exposed to the unconquerable hatred of the sun-worshippers, whose fire-temples had been hated by the pagan Greeks, and which they profoundly abominated; and regarded the Greek Emperor, a Christian like themselves, as far more worthy of allegiance than the Persian. This position, therefore, renders their claim to the honour of being martyrs very questionable; although there were many, doubtless, to whom that honour would be allowed, if, instead of the political historian, Procopius, and the superstitious Evagrius, some more trustworthy witness had related those events. Bearing in view, however, what these authors state, and passing over in silence the foolish tales which are copied by Romish compilers, a few facts shall be gathered from Abulpharagius, who must have drawn his information from original, or at least from Eastern, sources. Arme-

* Koran, chap. lxxxv., Sale's translation.

nian Christians, harassed by the efforts of Persians to compel them to worship the sun and fire, crossed the borders into the Grecian territory. Chosroes demanded that they should be given up to him; but Justinian replied, that if Christian people threw themselves on his protection to avoid the worship of demons, he would not surrender them into his hands, and went so far as to say that if such persons were his, the country where they dwelt was his also. Chosroes did not perceive the absurdity of that doctrine, which he would as readily have maintained in his turn; but contented himself with demanding tribute. A question of tribute or territory was then confounded with one of religion. The war between them took a correspondent character. From Nisibis, for example, the Christian population was driven out, and their lands laid waste. Chosroes entered Apamea with promise of peace; but dispersed the inhabitants, after selecting two thousand Christian maidens to send as a present to the Turks, who were in Perida. When these captives were within five miles of the Turkish camp, and resting on the bank of a deep river, they begged the soldiers who were conducting them to retire for a little, that they might be alone; and as the men had been commanded to drive them gently, and treat them kindly, that they might be given to the Turks in good health and appearance, they readily withdrew. No sooner were their charge free from hinderance, than, calling on the name of Christ their Saviour, to avoid the degradation and impurity to which they had been destined, they plunged into the flood. The guards hurried to the spot when they heard the shout; but only in time to see them carried down the stream, without power to save one.* Their case was deplorable, no doubt; yet prayer and faith might have sustained them; God could have delivered them; and martyrdom might have been recorded instead of suicide. Comparison of the conduct of the Christians in Apamea with that of those in the Arabian city, Negra, indicates a far more elevated standard of piety in the latter, who do not seem to have been spoiled by politics.

In Europe a flood of barbarism overwhelmed the church, which was almost everywhere devoid of true religion. She had trusted in Princes, but they were fallen; and now she could only sit in sackcloth, and weep amidst a desolation which the triumphant faith of Christ would have cheered; but she had not that faith. The Lombards, a tribe of Germans, together with a mixed multitude of other hardy barbarians, invaded Italy, and were regarded as enemies of Christianity; but even those who lay the calendar before them when writing history, and enrich their pages with names of martyrs not crowned in heaven, cannot but reveal the humiliating truth, that the approach of the invaders towards an Italian city was usually the signal for the flight of the Bishop, carrying with him, of course, the treasure of the church, the sordid treasure of accumulated oblations and gifts, but leaving the flock to sustain the brunt, and the inferior Clergy to suffer the indiscriminate violence of pagan invaders, utterly indifferent to all religious distinctions. The Lombards are mentioned here, because sometimes classed among the troublers of the church;

* Bar Hebræi Chronicon, Dynast. viii.

but they soon accepted the name of Christians from the conquered natives, no test of sincerity being proposed, nor any abstinence from sin earnestly exacted. In Spain, too, the claim of many whose lives were taken in the name of religion to be enrolled among the martyrs, is more than doubtful. Hermenegild, who is worshipped as one of the guardian saints of that country, is a famous example of the kind; for, according to the diffuse panegyrics written to his praise by native authors, he was educated in Arianism, but, having been ill-treated by an Arian step-mother, and then better instructed by a Catholic wife, took up arms against his father, led a civil war, was defeated, imprisoned, and beheaded. It is said, indeed, that in the solitude of the prison his mind became softened, and that, not satisfied with the hardship inseparable from such a situation, he did much voluntary penance; but his warmest admirers produce no evidence of true repentance. He is extolled, however, for the impiety of raising a rebellion against his father because a heretic; and a gold coin which he caused to be struck during that rebellion, bears on one side his own image, and on the other the significant inscription, *Hombre huye del Rey*, "A man flees from the King," in allusion to the direction given by St. Paul to *avoid** a man that is a heretic. *Saint* Leander, a Bishop of Seville, inspirited the "holy youth" to seek his father's kingdom and life; Gregory of Rome declared that he was in heaven; he was duly canonized as saint and martyr; and his history admirably illustrates the Papal doctrine which enjoins the destruction of heresy at any cost of rebellion, impiety, perfidy, or bloodshed.† England was invaded by the Anglo-Saxons in the preceding century; and at this time the Britons were driven into Wales and Cornwall; but their sufferings cannot be attributed to religious persecution. The conversion of a part of our Saxon ancestors to Christianity, not yet debased so far as to have lost its hallowing influence, yet far inferior to the divine religion which was first promulgated in England, was indeed a great event, but belongs to general ecclesiastical history.

The *seventh* century is marked by events which gave an entirely new aspect to the subsequent condition of the world. Magianism made its last effort to subdue the religion of Christ when the Persian hosts under Chosroes II., grandson of Nushirvan, invaded Palestine. A multitude of Arabs, and twenty-six thousand Jews, accepted pay from the Persian Monarch, and were the most zealous in wreaking vengeance on the Christians. They approached the Holy City, no longer fortified as when it withstood the siege of Titus, and soon took it by assault. The magnificent churches reared by the munificence of Constantine and Helena were in flames, the brutal soldiery gave loose to unreined fury, and thousands of Priests, Monks, and virgins perished by the sword. The Jews, it is said, not satisfied with this, purchased a large number of Christian captives for the mere purpose of putting

* Vulg. *devita*.

† Mariana, Hist. Esp., lib. v., cap. 12, and the Spanish Moreri's Biographical Dictionary. The legend in the Breviary at April 13th is in gross contradiction to those facts, the falsehood being extracted from the Dialogues of St. Gregory, and adopted by "the Church" in her solemn prayers.

them to death, until the number of slain rose to ninety thousand. But one week before this catastrophe, the monastic establishment of St. Sabas was broken into by a party of Arabs, who found only a remnant of the anchorites remaining, as the younger and more timorous had escaped; but aged persons of both sexes, after cruel tortures and indignities, were cut into pieces, and when, after the retreat of the Pagans, some of the Monks returned, they gathered their severed limbs and mangled bodies, which were solemnly interred.* But after this time the followers of Zoroaster were no more able to fight against Christianity. Chosroes himself was murdered by his son, and the Persian empire passed away before the new power which suddenly issued from the Arabian peninsula. The year 622, when Mohammed fled from the Koreishites, who were plotting to take his life, is the first of the era of the *Hegira*, or flight; and from this time the progress of his arms and those of his successors was rapid beyond example. In the year 637, Jerusalem was again taken by the Mussulmans, led by Abu Obeidah, after making long and courageous resistance. The Christian Patriarch at that time was the chief man in the city, and would only surrender on condition that Omar, the Chaliph, or successor of Mohammed, should himself come and ratify the treaty for the occupation of Jerusalem. Omar consented, came from Medina, signed the articles, and delivered them into the hand of the noble-minded Patriarch.† Hard as were those

* Fleury, Histoire Ecclésiastique, xxxvii., 10; Gibbon, Decline, &c., chap. xlvi.

† Ockley, in his valuable History of the Saracens, (Omar, Hej. 16, A.D. 637,) translates these articles from an Arabic history of Jerusalem, and observes that as they are the pattern which Mohammedan Princes have chiefly imitated, it is "not inappropriate" to present them to his readers. For the same reason they are inserted here.

"1. The Christians shall build no new churches, either in the city, or the adjacent territory. 2. They shall not refuse the Mussulmans entrance into their churches, either by night or day. 3. They shall set open the doors of them to all passengers and travellers. 4. If any Mussulman should be upon a journey, they shall be obliged to entertain him gratis for the space of three days. 5. They (the Christians) shall not teach their children the Koran, nor talk openly of their religion, nor persuade any one to be of it: neither shall they hinder their relations from becoming Mohammedans, if they have an inclination to it. 6. They shall pay respect to the Mussulmans, and, if they are sitting, rise up to them. 7. They shall not go like the Mussulmans in their dress, nor wear the same caps, shoes, or turbans, nor part their hair as they do, nor speak after the same manner, nor be called by the names used by the Mussulmans." (While this note was in the hands of the compositor, a member of the *Senate* at Madrid, who had made an incidental allusion to the authority of the Queen of England over her Protestant subjects, was rebuked by "El Catolico," organ of the priesthood, for having forgotten one of their familiar maxims:—"Cum hæreticis nec nomina debemus habere communia." The very sentiment in almost the same words! Pope and Turk were with reason put *together* in an old Litany. See "El Catolico," Madrid, April 13th, 1849.) "8. They shall not ride upon saddles, nor bear any sort of arms, nor use the Arabic tongue in the inscriptions of their seals. 9. They shall not sell any wine. 10. They shall be obliged to keep to the same sort of habit whithersoever they go, and always wear girdles upon their waists. 11. They shall set no crosses upon their churches, nor show their crosses nor their books openly in the streets of the Mussulmans. 12. They shall not ring, but only toll, their bells; nor shall they take any servant that has once belonged to the Mussulmans. 13. They shall not overlook the Mussulmans in their houses.

"The Christians having submitted on these terms, Omar gave them the following writing under his hand:—

"'In the name of the most merciful God. From Omar Ebn Al Khattab, to the inhabitants of Ælia. They shall be protected and secured both in their lives and fortunes, and their churches shall neither be pulled down, nor made use of by any but themselves.'"

conditions, they were not so severe as might have been feared from such a conqueror; but the Mohammedans threw aside gentleness towards the vanquished when they attained to greater power; and even this milder example suffices to show that Christians could expect nothing but degradation under their dominion. The doctrine which, even in our own day, has great prevalence with some European and nominally Christian statesmen, that proselytism is to be prevented, or at least by all means discouraged; that the Evangelist is to be silent, notwithstanding the injunction of his Master to go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature; was understood by the Mohammedans as best calculated to enervate the church, and smother the life of Christianity. Mohammedan, rationalist, and Jesuit can perfectly agree in discouraging or prohibiting all efforts to turn sinners from the error of their way; but *the Christian* can only deserve his name and maintain his piety by seeking, according to the opportunities and talents he possesses, to honour Christ, the good Shepherd, by gathering the lost into his fold. And in doing this he will not so much desire to promote the interests of his particular church, as the glory of the Saviour in the salvation of sinful men. The rise of Mohammedanism and the rancour of sects, added to the extreme ignorance and moral degradation of society, threw a gloom on the face of Christendom which would discourage any further reference to those times, but for evidence that amidst so much calamity and wickedness the influences of the Holy Spirit were not utterly withdrawn.

About the year 650, an Armenian Deacon, who had been carried captive into Syria, and must have there acquired a knowledge of the language of the country, slowly returning towards his native land, reached an obscure town, named Mananalis, not far from Samosata, (the present Samisat in the pachalic of Aleppo,) and found hospitable entertainment in the dwelling of Constantine, most probably a countryman of his, and resident in that place. When a few days' rest had worn away his weariness, he bade his host farewell, and presented him with two books in acknowledgment of his kindness. These were the Gospels and the Epistles, bound in distinct volumes, according to the general custom of antiquity, and the second volume deficient of the two Epistles of Peter and the Book of Revelation, which, indeed, could not be there, as they were not extant in the Syriac version, nor were they yet received by the Syrians as canonical. Neither was the Old Testament, or any part of it, included in the gift; either because the Deacon did not possess it, or, as the whole Bible was not yet circulated as one work, he might have retained it as independent of the New. Until that day the written word of God seems to have been unknown in the neighbourhood, except to the Priests, and to them but slightly, while the laity regarded themselves as profane persons, unworthy to read the sacred books. The public mind, too, was corrupted with Gnosticism, the Manichean heresy was prevalent, and Constantine might have considered the Old Testament, if he had ever heard of it, as exclusively adapted to an inferior dispensation, or even as the work of a spirit hostile to the God of the Christians.

But he read *these* books, his only guide, with close attention. The Holy Spirit, by whose inspiration they were written, enlightened his mind. Convinced of the absurdity of Manicheanism, he rejected the theology of Manes, and the voluminous writings of that sect which then abounded, although the word of God was unknown, and the two books given him by the stranger became the standard of his faith, as they had been the instrument of his conversion. But he found Christianity there without any of its corruptions; and as that was the only source whence he drew religious knowledge, his faith came to be in direct opposition to the most cherished notions and practices of the Clergy who were designated orthodox. He paid no worship to the Virgin, nor any veneration to cross or image. He sought not the intercession of any saint, saw no virtue in a relic, nor entertained exaggerated notions of sacramental grace. A few early prepossessions, which might have been removed by fair and brotherly instruction, but could not be dislodged by force, are said to have retained possession of his mind,—vestiges of an erroneous education, but not hindering faith in the Redeemer. *He was brought to God.* The fruits of the Spirit were manifest in his deportment, and in the effect of his labours; for, obeying the commission which God gave him at a time when the corrupt church would have withheld her orders, even if he could have desired them, he went into Pontus and Cappadocia, exhorting sinners to repent, and everywhere teaching that both Priests and people should study the books which had made him wise unto salvation. If he had merely opposed existing errors, and striven to demolish the fabric which he could not own as the church of Christ, his spirit would have been worldly and violent, and his followers would have been like him. Even enemies testified to the purity of their conduct, and the earnestness of their piety, but, of course, charged them with hypocrisy. To mark his admiration of the great Doctor of the Gentiles, Constantine assumed the name of one of his companions, Sylvanus, and some of his converts also took new names from others of the followers of the Apostle; while those whom he gathered into communion were called Paulicians, in honour of Paul himself, whose doctrine they professed to hold, or familiarly designated each other "fellow-pilgrims," as seeking the heavenly country. Their churches, too, were distinguished by names borrowed from the New Testament. For twenty-seven years Constantine-Sylvanus prosecuted his arduous mission among the votaries both of Manes and Zoroaster with constant success and increasing influence, until the Catholics, as they called themselves, did what the Arabs, who by that time had succeeded the Persian Governors of that region, although Mussulmans, had never thought of doing. Pretending to regard him as a heretic condemned by the imperial laws, the ecclesiastical authorities appealed to the Emperor, who sent one Symeon, a Greek officer, to Pontus, armed with the twofold power of the empire and the church, with orders to put him to death, reclaim or disperse his disciples, destroy whatever books he might find containing the doctrines of the new sect, or inflict capital punishment on any who should secrete them. A few of his flock were induced to

recant; and these men were brought into an open place, drawn up in a line, and commanded to stone their former Pastor, who was placed before them. They gathered stones, indeed, as if to perform the execrable deed; but when they saw the man whom they had once regarded as a messenger from God, they dropped the stones, slipped their hands into their girdles, and stood shuddering in the horror of apostacy. One, however, named Justus, as the Catholic historian writes, indulging heartlessly in the alliteration *Justus, justa persolvit*, "executed the act of justice," and slew the martyr. But it was an awful scene. Conscience paralyzed the party who had denied the Gospel; Christ himself was present at the martyrdom with spiritual power; and that very Symeon who had made so great ostentation of zeal in discharging his murderous commission, bowed under a conviction of his own sinfulness, accepted the truth, confessed Christ, united himself with the Paulicians, and afterwards joyfully gave up his life in testimony to the energy of converting grace. Nor could any persecution yet prevail against the Paulician church, although imperfectly constituted; and it will come to view again as we advance from century to century.*

The pagan idolater, the Magian, and the Jew, have henceforth little power to persecute the Christian, but are themselves persecuted. Mohammed and his successors fight against idolaters, and impose tribute on Jews and Christians, as far as their victories extend; while the elevation of the Bishops of Rome to temporal power becomes the source of most of the persecutions that have taken place in following times. The Emperor Maurice had undertaken a war with the Avars, a barbarian people, whose doubtful, and often perfidious, alliance had been resorted to in order to swell the imperial forces against Persia. But Maurice was not a soldier: his army perceived his incapacity, and was disheartened and alienated by his parsimony. A Centurion, Phocas by name, was presented by the soldiers as candidate for the purple, entered Constantinople amidst the acclamations of the populace, was consecrated by the Patriarch; and, fearing that one of the factions by which the city was divided would attempt the restoration of his predecessor, who had fled, he sent ruffians to Chalcedon with orders to take his life. The fugitive was dragged out of a church where he had taken sanctuary, and, after five of his sons had been murdered before his eyes, he was also beheaded. All the bodies were thrown into the sea, and the heads carried to Constantinople and exposed in public, until, being putrid, the tyrant reluctantly allowed them to be buried. Gregory I., then Bishop of Rome, perhaps influenced by a charge or suspicion of heresy which had fallen on Maurice, despatched a messenger to Constantinople, bearing a letter of congratulation, wherein he lauded, among other equally unreal excellencies, *the piety*

* An Inquiry into the History, &c., of the ancient Vallenses and Albigenses, by George Stanley Faber, B.D., vindicates Constantine from the charge of Manicheanism. Facts and Documents illustrative of the History, &c., of the ancient Albigenses and Waldenses, by the Rev. S. R. Maitland, are cited on the other side; but the facts, as above related, are too clear to be misunderstood. Gibbon (chap. liv.) relates them fully and impartially; except that, as usual, he ascribes the zeal of the martyr to "spiritual ambition."

of Phocas. If either of the two Emperors possessed piety, it must have been Maurice, notwithstanding his acknowledged defects as a Sovereign; for it is certain that he made public confession of sin, which Phocas never did; and although his prayers were mingled with superstitious offerings, according to the fashion of the time, it is undeniable that he implored divine pity with every appearance of sincerity; and when, after four of his sons had been murdered in his presence, and he saw an infant taken from its nurse's arms, also to be immolated to the jealousy of the usurper, but perceived that the woman had substituted her own child for his, his conscientious regard of justice refused the extraordinary contrivance to preserve the youngest of his family, and he desired that the proper child should be delivered to the sword. The bearer of Gregory's letter to Phocas was an assiduous courtier, although a Priest; and when afterwards elected in Rome as Bishop, received ample compensation from the Emperor, who authoritatively decided in his favour the long dispute between the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Bishop of Rome as to who should be the greater, by declaring him to be the universal Patriarch of the Christian world. The rude and depraved Centurion who had waded through blood to the imperial dignity could know nothing of the merits of an ecclesiastical dispute; but the truth was, that the Patriarch had humanely endeavoured to protect the widow of Maurice when she took refuge in the sanctuary of St. Sophia, and the elevation of Boniface III. to the headship of the Catholic church, as he fondly imagined, was evidently intended to mortify his less tractable competitor. This was the first establishment of the Papacy at Rome, in the year 606; this its title to lordship over God's heritage.

The massacre of the Monks of Bangor, in Wales, which took place the year after, is usually recounted among the calamities of the church. When the British Clergy, who had retired into Wales, were represented by some of their Bishops and others in the last Synod summoned by Augustine the Monk, the emissary of Gregory I. to this island, in order to effect a union, and there refused submission to the Bishop of Rome; Augustine, disappointed at the failure of his endeavours, angrily and imperiously told them, that if they would not join in unity with their brethren, they should be warred upon by their enemies; and if they would not preach the way of life to the English nation, should at their hands undergo the vengeance of death. Popish writers ascribe to "the man of God," as they call Augustine, the gift of prophecy; but an impartial reader would rather understand such language as a menace; and the event tends to confirm the suspicion. Some time afterwards, Ethelfrid, a Northumbrian King, a Pagan, invaded Wales, and made, Bede says, "a great slaughter of that *perfidious* nation" in the neighbourhood of Chester. At Bangor there was an immense monastic establishment, "in which, it is reported, there was so great a number of Monks, that the monastery being divided into seven parts, with a ruler over each, none of these parts contained less than three hundred men, who all lived by the labour of their hands. Many of these, having observed a fast of three days, resorted, among others, to pray at the aforesaid

battle, having one Brocmail appointed for their protector, to defend them whilst they were intent upon their prayers to be delivered from the swords of the barbarians. King Ethelfrid, being informed of the occasion of so unusual an assemblage, said, 'If, then, they pray to their God against us, in truth, though they do not bear arms, yet they fight against us, because they oppose us by their prayers.' He therefore commanded them to be attacked first, and then destroyed the rest of the impious army, not without considerable loss of his own forces." The Saxon chronicle relates that two hundred Monks were slain; Bede counts twelve hundred, but probably includes in this number all who perished in the destruction of the monastery, which immediately followed. The *venerable* Bede closes his account by saying, that "thus was fulfilled the prediction of the holy Bishop Augustine, though he himself had been long before taken up into the heavenly kingdom, that those perfidious men should feel the vengeance of temporal death also, because they had despised the offer of eternal salvation;" that salvation, in the estimation of Augustine, being dependent on their submission to his authority as representative of Gregory I. of Rome. Strange condition of salvation!*

The history of Europe in the eighth century affords little material, if any, for an authenticated martyrology. In France the Mayors of the palace having become too powerful for the Kings, their masters, a new race of Princes arose by their flagrant usurpation of the throne; and at last Charlemagne, during a very long reign, extending beyond the latter half of the century, recompensed the Pope for his sanction of that usurpation, by taking the church under his protection, and again served his own purposes by using it as an engine of political power. The irruption of the Saracens into Spain and other parts of Southern Europe, the establishment of their dominion, and a conflict not less political than religious with their Christian neighbours, kept the priesthood so much on the alert against the Mussulmans, as generally to divert them from the persecution of heretics; and the quarrel and war between the Greeks and Italians, which originated in the zeal of the latter for image-worship, and the determination of the former to resist the innovation, but which was aggravated by many personal and political considerations, confounded the idolater and the iconoclast under equal condemnation, and tended to extinguish every remaining spark of true religion. Great Britain was sunk in the most abject superstition; British independence could no longer bear up against the violence and overwhelming numbers of Anglo-Saxon adherents to the Roman see, which lorded it alike over Priests and people. The writings of the "venerable Bede," as he was called, are a humiliating evidence of the puerile superstition then prevalent; and the Roman taxation of our ancestors, who then began to pay "Peter's pence," finished and sealed their degradation. The miserable religion of that age is represented in the credulity which allowed currency to tales of miracles, visions, and prodigies, monstrous to the last degree,

* Bede, Ecclesiastical History, book ii., chap. 2; Foxe, Acts and Monuments, book ii.

with scarcely a vestige of heart-felt and sanctifying Christianity. There are some obscure traces of the Paulicians in Thrace, in course of emigration from Armenia, but so slight as not to warrant confident narration. For martyrs, properly so called, we must go to Syria and Arabia.

The Caliph Omar II. signalized his piety in the eyes of the Mussulmans by prolonged recitation of prayers, or devout sentences, until, wearied with prostrations, he would continue the exercise supported on a cord which hung from the top of his chamber, and proved his zeal in the cause of *islam*, or "devotion," to his Prophet, by employing greater severity than any of his predecessors had used for perverting Christians from their faith. Apostates were immediately exempted from the payment of tribute, according to general custom; but it is said, that when such inducements failed to overcome the constancy of Christians, he put many of them to death, and forbade the testimony of a Christian to be received in any case against a Mohammedan.* Walid II. is related to have cut out the tongue of Peter, Metropolitan of Damascus, and then banished him to Arabia, where he died. The offence which drew forth the vengeance of this Caliph, was a public denunciation by the Prelate of the errors of the Mohammedans as well as of the Manichees. The Roman Martyrology celebrates another Peter, who, being sick, sent for the principal Arabs in his neighbourhood, and, calling them around his bed, exhorted them to believe in Christ, to confess the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and thus allow him to recompense them for many acts of kindness. For the moment they fancied him to be delirious; but when he recovered, and, with even greater earnestness, ceased not to entreat them to renounce their errors, the stroke of a scimitar delivered them from his importunity, and added his name to the catalogue of martyrs.† The avidity of Governors was not unfrequently the real cause of the murder of Christians, irrespective of every other consideration, and the carnage of war was often increased by the violence of bigotry; but amidst the brief records of such events, there are a few fine instances of evangelical confession. Abulpharagius ‡ ascribes to this same Walid II. intense hatred of the Christians, and proves it by the following examples:—Christian scribes were no longer permitted to draw up public documents in the Greek language, but in Arabic. Schamel, a Chief of the Arab Christians of Taglib, was reproved by him for worshipping the cross at the same time that he was a Chief among the Arabs. Concerning the veneration of the material cross, if such it were, we have already spoken; and it may only be necessary to observe that, at this period of our history, public adoration of the crucifix could not have been permitted in Arabia, where every form of idolatry was utterly abolished, and that the language of Walid, being evidently contemptuous, cannot be taken as descriptive of the existing mode of Christian worship. The reply of Schamel was admirable: "As Chief of all the men of Taglib, I should fear, that, if I were to become

* Theophanes, cited by Fleury, A.D. 723.
† Ibid., A.D. 741.
‡ Dynastia x.

a Mohammedan, destruction would overtake them all. For if I deny the faith, they also may deny Christ." The impatient Caliph commanded him to be smitten on the cheek, and taken out of his presence, swearing that he should eat his own flesh unless he would consent to be a proselyte; but no threatening could subdue his faith, and he submitted to have a piece of flesh cut out of his side, which was roasted and thrust into his mouth. Still unmoved, he was cast into prison until the wound was healed, and, bearing the honourable scar, persevered in confession of our divine Master to the day of his death. As for Walid, he grew in zeal, and, like other persecutors, artfully confounding good and bad, at the same time had wizards swum to death,* and Christian captives in all the cities of Syria taken into the churches and there slain; which is an important fact, for it shows that those captives had refused to save their lives by renouncing Christianity. Henceforward the alternative of death or apostacy is constantly enforced, not only on captives, but on inoffensive and defenceless multitudes. It is related of the Caliph Al Mahdi, that he was met by a great multitude of people in the neighbourhood of Aleppo, when visiting that city, some of them well mounted and richly dressed; but that, on hearing that they were all Christians, he was exceedingly angry, and required them instantly to become Mussulmans. About five thousand men did change their external profession; the women, as of less value, were allowed free choice; and of one man only it is recorded that he played the martyr,† that he was not less meek than constant, and that his name was Lit. The name was not recorded in any formal narrative, but remained in the tradition of survivers as in the records of heaven. As for the apostates, their town was taken by a hostile tribe about twenty years afterwards, the wealth preserved for so little time by the sacrifice of conscience fell into other hands, and they were dispersed beyond recovery.

While the conditions imposed on Christians by the victorious Saracens diminished their number, and, in some countries, swept away the last vestige of their religion, there were a few, both in the East and the West, who still preferred to die for Christ, and, knowing that ambiguous concession or partial conformity would neither satisfy the persecutors nor please God, even courted martyrdom. They saw their churches falling into ruin, the congregations rapidly diminishing by the defection of the timid and the worldly, the efforts of reviving piety often frustrated by resistless violence; and when the comparative liberality of a less bigoted ruler had allowed the re-erection of a sanctuary, notwithstanding the law which forbade the building of churches, the inflexible zeal of his successor would probably lead to the demolition of the edifice, or its occupation as a mosque. To them death would be more desirable than life; the name of Mohammed was

* "Jussit etiam incantores, qui in regione Akulensi vivebant, interfici. Ligno alligati suspensique, ne mox interirent, in fluvium projecti sunt. Qui natarunt occisi sunt, quia præstigiis natarunt. Qui autem submersi sunt, suæ sorti relicti sunt. (Ab. Pharag. Vers. Lat., ed. Kirsch., p. 122.) One would scarcely have expected to find such an identity of superstitious barbarism in Arabia and England, and that after an interval of a thousand years or more.

† This is the expressive phrase of the historian, as already cited.

as hateful as that of Christ was precious; and notwithstanding the scantiness of scriptural knowledge, the multiplying corruptions of worship, and the degeneracy of the Clergy, there was a residue of simple and unyielding faith in the bosoms of a few, and from their lips an univocal confession to the divinity of the Saviour claims our respect, and exemplifies the power of Gospel truth whenever it is the subject of sincere and humble faith. The Greek Emperor Theophilus, in one of his expeditions into Syria, had destroyed Sozopetra, a small town, the birth-place of the Caliph Al Motassem. The Vicar of the Prophet vowed reprisal, caused Amorium, the name of the Phrygian city where the father of Theophilus first saw light, to be painted on the shields of his army, now united into one vast body, and marched toward the devoted place. Theophilus rejected the advice of his counsellors to evacuate the town and leave its empty palaces only to fall before the fury of the Saracen, but avoiding the loss of life. He prepared for battle, and Amorium was encouraged to stand a siege. The siege began; the brave inhabitants withstood the enemy for fifty-five days, until a domestic traitor led Motassem to storm the city at the weakest place, and enabled him to rase it to the ground. Equal barbarities were committed in those wars on both sides, and Mohammedans were murdered as cruelly as Christians; but among the chief persons and officers carried as prisoners of war to Bagdad, there were a few who not only shared the fortune of war, but patiently endured suffering for the sake of Christ. In a prison so dark that not a ray of light could penetrate, and the prisoners could only distinguish each other by the voice, they were confined in irons. Their only companions were the jailers, their food bread and water, their bed the bare ground. Sometimes they were permitted to walk in chains through the streets of Bagdad to solicit alms, each accompanied by ten soldiers; and when the charitable had given them bread, the loaves were cut up in daylight by the keepers, lest they should contain letters. As soon as they were seen to be enfeebled and emaciated through long imprisonment, attempts were made to induce them to change religions. The Caliph sent the ablest Mussulmans, who at first came only in the character of humane visiters, bringing money and clothing, and then began to talk of the kindness of their master, "who counted the conquest of a city as a little thing, in comparison with winning souls." When the Christians rejected the overture with horror, the Missionaries gently renewed their solicitations, reminding them of their parents, wives, children, and country. To recover all these they advised them only to dissimulate a little, merely to submit to circumcision, and recite a prayer with the Caliph. They would have riches and favours heaped on them; and, watching the chances of war, might return to their homes, and embrace Christianity again. "Would you do so," said the captives, "if you were in our place?" They swore that they would; for nothing was so dear as liberty. "Then," they replied, "we cannot accept advice as to leaving our religion from men who are not steadfast in their own." Again the tempters brought alms, and, sitting down beside them, made large professions of commiseration. "Are not these persons, whom we find here laden with

fetters, relatives of the Emperor, men of spirit and courage, brave warriors? Have they not numerous troops? What renders all these advantages useless, but their denial of the Prophet, by whose servants they have been conquered? We are not surprised, however, at their unbelief, since they have never been instructed: their ignorance entitles them to forgiveness." Then, addressing the prisoners, they said: "Leave this rugged path in which the Son of Mary requires you to go, and enter on the pleasant way which our Prophet has shown us, both for this life and for the other. What does he teach incredible, when he says that God can give to those who serve him all kinds of pleasure in this life, and Paradise in the other? Reject not these benefits: God is good, and, seeing that men are too weak to keep the law of Jesus, hard and difficult as it is, he has sent his Prophet Mohammed to release them from those burdens, and save them by faith alone." The Christians refuted this charge of imperfection and difficulty, and finished by declaring that nothing should separate them from the love of Christ. Some time afterwards a party of Fakirs came to the prison with alms again. After presenting the gift, they kissed them, sat down, and one began a sort of argument. "You see to whom God gives power: is it to the Romans or the Mussulmans? To whom gives he fruitful lands and victorious armies? Is it not to us? But he is just. Then if we did not observe his commandments, he would not give us such good things; neither would he have subjected you to us, if you had not refused to believe his Prophet." The Christians replied, "Now suffer us to ask you a question. When two men dispute for possession of an estate, if one does no more than cry that it is his, without producing any witnesses, and the other, without debating, brings many witnesses, and worthy of credit, to which of the two will the inheritance be adjudged?" "To him," said the Mussulmans, "who brings good witnesses." The Christians continued, "Jesus Christ came of a Virgin, as you yourselves say, having as witnesses all the ancient Prophets, who foretold his coming. You say that Mohammed came to bring a third law; but should he not have had two or three Prophets at least to accredit his mission? And as for the advantage you pretend to draw from your conquests, do you not know of those of the Persians, who subdued almost all the world; and of the Greeks, who conquered the Persians; and of the ancient Romans, whose empire was so extensive? Did they follow the true religion? Were they not idolaters? But God sometimes grants victory to those who serve him; sometimes he permits them to be conquered, when they have offended him, that he may chastise them by the hands of the wicked." In the endurance of such conflicts they spent seven years in prison, praying for the conversion of the Mohammedans, and maintained a clear conscience,* until the

* Fleury, Hist. Eccles., xlviii., 2. The French historian ends his narrative with, "Rendant grâces à Dieu, de ce qu'il leur donnoit le moyen d'expier leurs péchés passés, et priant," &c. This looks like a superfluous addition; but even if they did at any time fancy their sufferings to be meritorious, which in so dark an age is not improbable, they might have understood the spirit of the promise, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." (John vii. 17.) And no doubt they knew more of Christ after suffering in his cause, his grace enabling them thus to suffer.

successor of the Caliph, Al Wathek, caused them to be put to death.*

From the East we return to Spain, where the Saracens are acknowledged to have exercised a sway far less severe than that of their brethren in Asia: yet even there they persecuted unto death. Abdalrahman II., and Mohammed, his son, Caliphs of Cordova, although bound by treaty to tolerate Christianity, were not displeased when occasion occurred to promote its ruin. Liberty of worship was, indeed, allowed to the original possessors of the country: Priests, Monks, and Nuns appeared in the streets of the metropolis in their distinctive costume, without any molestation; churches and monasteries rose by the side of mosques; from the towers and from the minarets the mixed population were summoned by criers and by bells to their respective solemnities; and in return for this toleration, the Christians were required to observe silence in regard to Mohammedanism. Whoever should utter a word of blasphemy, as it was called, against the Prophet, would thereby incur the penalty of death. They were also forbidden to enter the mosques. On the one side, silence and perfect submission, and on the other, zeal with absolute power, was the condition of society approved by the invaders of the Peninsula; and, if it could have been maintained, would have left abject Christianity to die away without a blow. But the Christian population were incessantly subjected to petty grievances. The taxes, light at first, were gradually increased until they became oppressive; and remonstrances, however reasonable, drew down visitations of arbitrary power which often made the life of the Christian an almost insufferable burden. Conciliation was at an end, and the two races regarded each other with bitter hatred. While the Spaniards were secretly contriving how they might throw off the yoke, their Mussulman neighbours looked on them with an abhorrence each day more virulent, and thought themselves defiled by even touching the garment of a Christian. They jealously observed their words, their looks, and most trifling actions; used towards them every expression of contempt, and endeavoured to draw them into quarrels where public power would in the end give vengeance to private enmity. The Spaniards, justly indignant, were often betrayed into the utterance of language which exposed them to the utmost consequence of blasphemy, and suffered the mitigated penalty of stripes and imprisonment, after which the oppressors took credit to themselves for not having inflicted that of death. Renegades were constantly presenting themselves to the Magistrates to purchase temporal freedom at the fearful cost of everlasting ruin; and one of these, named Perfecto, a Priest, who had first exposed himself to danger, by some conduct or language offensive to the Mohammedans, and then apostatized, being at last wounded in conscience, could not repress the utterance of his real sentiments in familiar conversation with his new companions. "Christ," said he, "is God over all, blessed for ever; and if I may tell you, my friends, in strictest confidence, what the Christians think of the Prophet, they believe him to be one of the false Prophets predicted in the

* Fleury, Hist. Eccles., xlviii., 26. A.D. 845.

Gospel; that he has led many astray, and will suffer, with them, the vengeance of eternal fire. But I tell you this only in answer to your questions, and trusting in your promise to keep the secret." They repeated the assurance that they would not betray him; but a few days afterwards, as he was walking in the street, these same persons shouted that he had blasphemed the Prophet, the bystanders seized him, and he was instantly dragged into the presence of the Cadi, who sent him to prison as one that had denied the Prophet after making a profession of *islám*, and condemned him to be put to death at the next great festival. He spent his time in fastings and prayer, and, when brought out for execution, cursed Mohammed *and his followers*, and was beheaded. This malediction spoils the whole; but it shows the spirit of the times, and leads to the observation, unhappily too applicable to all the "martyrs of Cordova," as they are generally called, that Perfecto, self-condemned for his defection from the Christian cause, and actuated by bitter hatred of the party to which he had been reluctantly attached, had not the mind of Christ. The nine or ten years of persecution which followed afford material for the history of persecution, rather than for a Martyrology, although a crowd of *saints*—saints in the estimation of their Church, because they died on account of religious profession—are found in the Roman Calendar, and honoured with special commemoration under the above historical title. The Christian population of the Caliphate were so enraged at the sight of these executions, that the Mohammedan authorities feared a revolt, and would fain have tolerated solemn protestations against their religion, if such apparent unfaithfulness to the honour of Islamism would not have exposed them to the fury of their own people. But a powerful party arose among the Spaniards themselves, who, from timidity, prudence, or unfaithfulness, either so indifferent to all religion as to think martyrdom a folly, or so persuaded of the mixture of human passion with the zeal of those who came forward unsought, to solicit and provoke the sentence of death, opposed the zeal of the confessors in an extraordinary manner. They maintained that Christians should be satisfied with liberty of worship, and with a meek and seasonable confession of Christianity, but should not wantonly provoke their adversaries. They affirmed that persons who thus suffered death were not martyrs; and adduced the easy disproof of their claim to that honour, by showing their dead bodies in a state of putrefaction, whereas a true martyr's body, as it was vulgarly believed, would be without corruption. The Bishop Recaphredo, and the Count Servando, led this party; and, by an unwonted coalition with the enemies of the Christian name, assisted in apprehending the most zealous of the confessors, who were confined in prison, that they might be prevented from compelling the Cadi to shed their blood. Abdalrahman himself rejoiced in this interference, and, at their request, he, the Vicar of Mohammed, the pledged extirpator of every other religion from the face of the earth, summoned a number of Bishops to meet at Cordova, in order to check the zeal of Christians by an ecclesiastical decision. The "false Synod," as Romish writers not unreasonably call it, met,

and declared that all who broke the conditions of the confederation with the Moors should be regarded as malefactors. This decision was not without effect. Many withdrew from the scene of conflict; while others, resolving to obey God rather than man, and believing that God required the sacrifice of their life, hastened to snatch the crown of martyrdom, and deserved, at least, the praise of undoubted sincerity and heroic, if not Christian, devotion. Their case is decided at a higher tribunal, and it becomes not us to pronounce a decision on motives which can be known only to the Lord in whose name they chose to die. It is remarkable that Abdalrahman died suddenly, after he had been looking on the bodies of some Christians that had hung too long on a gallows, and directing that they should be burnt. He fell while giving the orders, was carried speechless into his chamber, and died the same night.*

But the nominally-Christian priesthood were not less intolerant than the Saracens, as the case of Gotteschalcus, a German Monk, who suffered stripes and imprisonment for maintaining the peculiar doctrine of Augustine, respecting election and predestination, sufficiently demonstrates. Rabanus, Archbishop of Mentz, and Hincmar, Archbishop of Rheims, headed a formal persecution of their erring brother, after they had failed to influence his judgment by angry disputation; and having had him examined by a company of thirteen Bishops appointed by that Synod, and his alleged heresy proved, he was condemned, according to the canons of the Council of Agde, and the rule of St. Benedict, to be scourged with rods and imprisoned. Being of the diocess of Soissons, within the province of Hincmar, he was placed in his hands. In the presence of Charles the Bald, King of France, the barbarous penalty was inflicted, and he was there forced to drop a bundle of his writings into the fire; but rather confirmed than shaken in his notions of predestinarian doctrine, he was forthwith thrown into prison, suffered patiently for conscience' sake, and after an honourable endurance of not less than twenty-one years was translated, it may be reasonably hoped, into that happy world, where the saints no longer see through a glass, darkly, but know even as they are known. It was a saying of Charlemagne, that God had given two *swords* for the government of the world, one to the Pope, and the other to the Emperor; and it was his policy to act in concert with the Pope by keeping the temporal sword unsheathed in terror to all who should resist or despise the spiritual authority. Yet he placed himself at the head of the Church in the empire, ruled the Clergy, exacted compensation for his patronage by chastising them gently for their immoralities, opposing image-worship, and interdicting adoration of the saints. He more than made amends for that interference by an unsparing persecution of heretics; and whoever refused baptism, being as yet unconverted from Paganism, or presumed to eat flesh in Lent, was threatened with pain of death.†

* Fleury, Hist. Eccles., xlviii., 47, 54; xlix., 1, 14, 35, 42; Mariana, Hist. Esp., vii., 15.

† Menzel, Hist. of Germany, part i., chap. 115, *et passim;* Hallam's Europe during the Middle Ages, chap. i., part 1.

So entirely was persecution the fashion of the times. The ferocious barbarism of general society thoroughly imbued the church,—to use the word in its lax and popular acceptation. A Pope, Eugenius II., hoping to promote the ends of justice, when few respected the sanctity of oaths, made superstitious appeals to the judgment of God by ordeal an ecclesiastical institution. By making the accused drink holy water under imprecation, by plunging him into a river, by requiring him to walk on red-hot iron, or between fires, or by bringing parties litigant, or their champions, to single combat, the Priests hoped to improve on the ordinary administration of justice, which had become extremely ineffective, and to prevent the desecration by perjury, of altars, crucifixes, and relics, on which persons abjured or sworn had been used to lay their hands without fear ;* and those ordeals were attended with appointed forms of prayer, notwithstanding the prohibitions of Councils. The labours of Amalarius the Fortunate, and others of the same kind, mark the ninth century with a strong character of ritualism, as might be expected when inward piety was scarcely known; and at the same time the monstrous invention of transubstantiation distinguishes that age as the midnight of the Church, when, under Cimmerian darkness, the evidences of sense and reason and Scripture were buried out of sight in western Christendom ; while, in the East, the human understanding, struggling against the absurdities of image-worship, and contending with the efforts of the Bishop of Rome and his adherents to plunge the world into idolatry again, was as unhallowed as Heathenism itself; and a calamitous warfare, excited by those efforts, failed, because not waged aright, and left the name of *iconoclast*, or "image-breaker," as a byword of discredit to be equally applied to godly men who should endeavour, actuated by a purer spirit, to remove idols from the sanctuaries of Christian worship. Such an one was Claudius of Turin. That deservedly-eminent man was a Spaniard, a disciple, in his youth, of Felix of Urgel, who held the doctrine of Nestorius; but Claudius thought for himself, and does not appear to have accepted the opinions of his master. After having sustained the office of Chaplain in the court of Louis the Pious, when that Prince succeeded to the empire, he was appointed by him to the bishopric of Turin, where idolatry was then making great progress. He entered on that charge with the advantage of an established reputation for piety and learning, a reputation which is confirmed at this day by the remnants of his writings, extant chiefly in manuscript. Of these it is enough to say, that they prove him to have been evangelical as a theologian ; and, in every essential point, a Protestant in discipline. His imperial patron protected him amidst the attacks of his hostile brethren, constantly affirming that his ministry and government were necessary to the welfare of the diocess of Turin, and that he could not be removed thence without irreparable injury to his flock. He is chiefly known to us as a reformer, who had the images removed from all the churches of that diocess, preached against saint-worship, and discouraged pilgrimages ; and an extract from one of his writings, as translated by Allix, will most exactly

* Fleury, Hist. Eccles.. xlvii. 30.

exhibit the views of this first precursor of the Protestant Reformation. "Mark what the followers of the false religion and superstition do allege: they say it is in commemoration and honour of our Saviour, that we serve, honour, and adore the cross; whom nothing pleaseth in our Saviour, but that which was pleasing to the ungodly; namely, the reproach of his passion, and the token of his death. They witness hereby that they perceive only of him, what the wicked saw and perceived of him, whether Jews or Heathens, who do not see his resurrection, and do not consider him but as altogether swallowed up of death, without minding what the Apostle saith, 'We know Jesus Christ no longer according to the flesh.' God commands one thing, and these people do quite the contrary: God commands us to *bear* our cross, and not to worship it; but these are all for worshipping it, whereas they do not bear it at all, neither will they bear it, either corporally or spiritually: to serve God after this manner, is to go a whoring from him. For if we ought to adore the cross, because Christ was fastened to it, how many other things are there which touched Jesus Christ, and which he made according to the flesh? Did not he continue nine months in the womb of the Virgin? Why do not they, then, on the same score, worship all that are virgins, because a virgin brought forth Jesus Christ? Why do not they adore mangers and old clouts, because he was laid in a manger, and wrapped up in swaddling clothes? Why do not they adore fisher-boats, because he slept in one of them, and preached to the multitudes, and caused a net to be cast out, wherein was caught a miraculous quantity of fish? Let them adore asses, because he entered into Jerusalem upon the foal of an ass; and lambs, because it is written of Him, 'Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world.' But these sort of men would rather eat live lambs, than worship their images. Why do they not worship lions, because he is called 'the Lion of the tribe of Judah?' or rocks, because it is said, 'And the Rock was Christ?' or thorns, because he was crowned with them? or lances, because one of them pierced his side? All these things are ridiculous, rather to be lamented than set forth in writing; but we are forced to set them down, in opposition to fools, and to declaim against those hearts of stone, whom the arrows and sentences of the word of God cannot pierce; and therefore we are fain to fling such stones at them. Come to yourselves again, ye miserable transgressors: why are you gone astray from truth? and why, being become vain, are ye fallen in love with vanity? Why do you crucify again the Son of God, and expose him to open shame; and by this means make souls by troops to become the companions of devils, estranging them from their Creator by the horrible sacrilege of your images and likenesses, and precipitating them into everlasting damnation?" *

The people of Piedmont could not be insensible to the force of

* Allix's Remarks upon the ecclesiastical History of the ancient Churches of Piedmont, chap. ix., gives so full an account of Claudius as entirely supersedes every other reference.

these familiar illustrations. His rejection of images was reversed after his death; but the memory of the reformation and the tradition of the doctrine were deposited in the public mind, and reappeared in later ages. The Paulicians, too, were still migrating into Europe from Armenia in small companies, and assiduously spreading their views in the provinces northward and westward of Constantinople, and are regarded by many as the living materials of a future renovated church, laid up by divine Providence simultaneously with those of northern Italy. Unless history has been falsified beyond example, and that by numerous and distinct witnesses; and unless the persecutors of heretics were as accomplished in deception as they were unanimous in bigotry, which is too much to be credited; the majority of wandering Paulicians, without a complete Bible, unable to assemble for stated worship, except during brief and uncertain periods, destitute of regularly-appointed Teachers and of communion guarded by discipline, irritated by ill-treatment, and involved in the general ignorance and wickedness of the times, gradually imbibed Manicheanism, while they would reject even truth, because coming to them from the Priests, and aided in spreading widely fantastic speculations like those of Manes throughout Europe. But of a few, it appears to be not less capable of proof that they were *Protestants before Luther*. The main body of the followers of Constantine-Sylvanus remained in Armenia; were goaded into rebellion by the cruelty of persecutors; and, after having waged formidable war with the Grecian Emperor, Basil, were finally defeated, and their name now disappears from the pages of oriental history.

Tales of ascetic devotees, not less regardless of decency than of comfort, and prodigal of a life that was oppressed with penance, abound in the annals of the *tenth century*. The barbarians of northern Europe preyed on the Christian states; churches were desecrated, monasteries pillaged, and ecclesiastical persons murdered in common with others; or, when they made themselves conspicuous to the enemy, in preference to others. It would be uncharitable to affirm so much of all, but of many it is impossible to doubt that they rushed on death by the sword or arrow of the barbarian as wantonly, if not as proudly, as did the old Gymnosophists when they displayed their rude contempt of life by dying on flaming pyres, to the astonishment of the beholders. They were admired with superstitious veneration, canonized, and worshipped. Here and there appeared a confessor whose history, although encumbered with fabulous inventions, deserves to be remembered. Such an one was Adalbert, Bishop of Prague. The Priests of his diocess opposed him, because he objected to their custom of taking wives; and, although there can be no question as to who was in the right, their manner of contending for that liberty does not prove that they possessed true religion, any more than would his obstinacy, on the other side, prove him to be utterly unenlightened. His education, like that of all his brethren, had been miserably defective. But the people were savage and licentious; he could not safely live among them, and was obliged to flee. Hastening to Rome, he resigned his mitre to the Pope, and retired to the monastery of

Monte Cassino, in Naples. Yielding to the entreaties of his Archbishop, who desired to see the diocess of Prague restored to order, he soon left that retreat, and solicited of the Bohemians permission to dwell among them again. This denied, he determined to endeavour to raise a new church among the Heathen; proceeded to Dantzic, and there taking ship, landed, after a few days, on some part of the shore of the Baltic, where a small monastery had been established, and thence, with two of the brethren, went to a small island, or *delta*, formed by the outfalls of a river, and began to preach to the inhabitants with great boldness. But the chief men of the island attacked him with clenched fists; and, on another occasion, one of them levelled him to the ground with the stroke of an oar. Rising on his feet again, he meekly said, "I thank thee, O Lord, that I have suffered this stroke for Him who was crucified for me." He then crossed the river to the main-land; but, before a day was over, the Chief of the village made him prisoner; the savages gathered from all parts, with vociferous expressions of rage, and seemed ready to tear him limb from limb. They asked him who he was, and why he came thither. "I am a Sclave by nation," said he, "by name Adalbert, by profession a Monk, once a Bishop, now your Apostle. The object of my voyage is your salvation, that you may leave your deaf and dumb idols, and acknowledge your Creator, who is God alone; and that, believing in his name, you may have life, and receive as recompence eternal joy in heaven." Their anger was bridled for the time; but they refused to allow him entrance into their country, and threatened that if he remained another day he should lose his head. That night he and his companions departed, and rowed on the river till they reached another village, where five days were spent in silence, or deliberation. He then proposed that they should lay aside their habit, which had shocked the Pagans, allow their hair and beard to grow after the fashion of the country, and, being dressed like natives, converse familiarly with them, refrain from formal preaching, and earn their food by labour. He also proposed to visit a tribe with whose language he was familiar, and to whom, therefore, access would be more easy. Next morning the party set out on the proposed journey, singing psalms cheerfully as they went, and at mid-day rested in an open country, where they first solemnly communicated, then took a meal, and, after walking a little further, laid them on the ground to rest, and soon fell asleep. Then came a party of Heathen, headed by Siggo, an idol-Priest, and bound the defenceless Missionaries hand and foot. Adalbert exhorted his brethren to suffer courageously for Christ, when the Priest hurled a dart at him, others did the same; and he, being thus transfixed with the deadly missiles, and reeking in his blood, raised his eyes towards heaven, prayed in a loud voice for his own soul and for his persecutors, and in a few moments expired. The savages cut off his head, and carried it away on the point of a stake as a sign of their success in resisting Christian innovation; and the trembling companions of his mission returned to their monastery with the appalling tale. The single-mindedness and persevering devotion of Adalbert, equally free from rashness and

ostentation, mark him as worthy to be called a martyr.* The necessary brevity of this part of our work precludes the few other examples of the same class contained in the annals of that age.

The condition of Christendom was everywhere deplorable. Either there was war with Pagans, or Christian Princes were using favourable conjunctures to engage them to submit to baptism, and enter into matrimonial alliances; so deepening and perpetuating the character of Paganism, which had already been impressed on the populations of the dismembered empire. Priests and Monks were, at the same time, religious propagandists and political emissaries, pledged to conquer or to die in prosecution of the holy war. The first shock with Mohammedanism was over. In the East, and in Africa, Christians, such as they were, became habituated to absolute submission; multitudes everywhere fell away to the religion of their rulers, and the defection of even dignitaries in the church ceased to excite surprise. Those renegades seldom failed to court the favour of their patrons by vexing their former brethren, as is related by the chronicler, in a single line, of one of those perverts, a Nestorian Metropolitan of Dakuka, a city of Assyria.† In Spain the extraordinary elevation of the Caliphate overawed and dazzled both Jews and Christians; and the latter, for the sake of peace, and to avoid incurring subjection to ruinous exactions, sank into a state of abject servitude and habitual compromise of religious principle, until that principle became almost extinct. But the torpor of the public mind was soon to be broken. Gerbert, a French Monk, who had pursued his studies at Cordova for the sake of hearing the Moslem professors, and had also witnessed the splendour of the church at the court of the French King, having his mind enlarged by learning, to the horror of many a poor cleric, who attributed his intellectual superiority to Satanic inspiration, and with his imagination impressed by experience of the contrasted fortunes of the Christian people, was elevated to the See of Rome, and took the name of Sylvester II. There he heard lamentable tidings from Palestine, where the pilgrims to the "holy sepulchre" learned the sufferings of Christians by participation, as well as by report, and issued a letter hortatory to arouse Christendom, if possible, to some great effort for emancipation. Here originated the Crusades; a system of armed intervention in promotion of ecclesiastical interests wherever endangered, either by infidel or dissident, that will appear in subsequent chapters with unhappy frequency.

Voluminous indeed would be a full history of persecution at this period; for the zeal of churchmen chiefly displayed itself in violence. In the year 1017, or 1022, a number of persons were discovered at Orleans who held private meetings, and whose doctrine differed from that of the church. To ascertain their doctrine, one Arefaste, a nobleman, received permission from the Bishop to pretend to be an

* Fleury, Hist. Eccles., lvii., 47, 48; Moreri, Great Historical Dictionary.

† Abulpharagius, Dynast. x., where the version of Kirsch, Dedakuka, is an oversight for de-Dakuka, *of* Dakuka. The name of the apostate Metropolitan seems to have perished.

inquirer, get introduction to their assemblies, and solicit admission to membership, with an injunction to make known their secret doctrine and usages. To fortify himself against the illusion of their errors, he was directed to communicate privately as a "Catholic" every day, and so obtain sacramental grace for the deletion of daily guilt, and the more successful prosecution of the imposture. In due time he fulfilled the commission; and, guided by his information, Robert, King of France, and the Prelates, caused some of the Canons of the cathedral, men in high repute for learning and sanctity, other persons of respectability, and Stephen, once the Queen's Confessor, among the rest, to be arrested. They were examined by the King and the Bishops in the cathedral with closed doors, and the discordant reports of their examiners and enemies are the only original materials extant by which to judge of them. They were condemned under the name of Manicheans; but the accusation of Arefaste laid abominations to their charge as exorbitant as his own hypocrisy and perfidy, too polluting to be repeated, and too monstrous to be believed. Their final answer, as reported by those examiners, throws some light on their character. "The doctrine," they said, "which you," the Bishops, "hold, you may tell to those who savour of earthly things, and who believe the figments of carnal men written upon animal parchment. But, to us, who have the law written in the inner man by the Holy Ghost, and who relish nothing save what we have learned from God, the Creator of all things, you vainly propound matters which are superfluous, and altogether alien from sound divinity. Put, therefore, an end to your words, and do with us what you list. We clearly behold our King reigning in heavenly places. With his own right hand he is raising us to an immortal triumph; and is, even now, about to bestow upon us the fulness of joy celestial." Bad men, who had been careful to avoid punishment by congregating in secret for the perpetration of obscene orgies, would rather deny an imputed heresy than suffer death by confession. Good men, who had been so prudent as to guard against persecution by the private exercise of their religion, might be bold enough to avow the truth when dragged before such a tribunal. They were instantly condemned to die. To prevent the mob from pressing into the building, the Queen herself kept the door of the cathedral when they were taken out to be burnt; and to show her zeal, if not to vent her spite on the man who had perhaps been too strict in watching her conduct, with a stick she thrust out an eye of Stephen, her former Confessor, who was dragged in that condition to the stake. It is said that a Priest and a Nun recanted, but that ten Canons and four laymen were committed to the flames, and that when they began to feel the fire, they cried out that they had been deceived; but it was then too late to save them. Whether too late or not, the fact that they were burnt to death is certain; and there is good ground for conjecture that they had received the doctrine of the Paulicians, taught, at first, by an Italian lady who came to live in France, and that they held nothing more in common with the ancient Manicheans than some trifling speculations, which might have been maliciously inter-

preted, and said to be derived from those heretics.* In Hungary there were many victims to the profession of Christianity. The nation had been recently proselyted by means of royal authority, which was exerted in the distribution of rewards and punishments, with all the usual appliances of temporal inducement to profess a faith honoured in the highest places. But the King's religion fell with the King himself before a general insurrection of the Hungarians, who invited three fugitive nobles to head the revolt, under the condition of allowing them to live as Pagans, follow their old customs, kill the Bishops and Clergy, demolish the churches, and worship idols. A man named Vatha was the first who openly relapsed. Following his exhortations, the multitude again offered sacrifices, and indulged their Tartarian taste in feasting on horse-flesh. They killed Christians, both Priests and laics, and burnt several churches: then, in full revolt against their King, Peter, they murdered the Germans and Latins whom he had brought into the country, and threatened to massacre all the Bishops, Priests, and collectors of tithes. By this time two of the insurgent Chiefs were marching on Pesth. Four Bishops, on their approach to the city, went out to meet them, endeavoured to avert their fury by showing them signs of honour, and then returned within the gates, where Vatha and a crowd of Pagans surrounded and assailed them with a shower of stones. The Bishop, Gerard, was riding in a chariot, and for some time suffered no injury, but pronounced benedictions on the raging multitude, until they overturned the chariot, and stoned him as he lay upon the ground. "O Lord Jesus Christ," he cried with a loud voice, "lay not this sin to their charge: they know not what they do." Transpierced by a lance, he breathed his last. Other two Bishops, and a great number of Christians, were slain the same day; and so that half-barbarous people terribly repaid the severities by which they had been coerced into the profession of an unfelt, and therefore unknown, religion, and avenged themselves for the contributions unwisely levied for its support. The King was killed; one only of the rebel Chiefs survived the civil war, and gained the crown, which, notwithstanding his promise to the contrary, he caused to be placed on his head by three Bishops, who had escaped the slaughter; and then, thinking perhaps to atone for his temporary re-establishment of Paganism, he suddenly commanded all his subjects to become Christians again under pain of death, and they once more submitted to profess a faith inwardly more despised than ever.† Revolutions of the same kind were not unfrequent in northern Europe. The Sclavonians beyond the Elbe, northward of Saxony, had yielded in great numbers to the efforts of their Prince, Gotteschalc, to bring them over to a political profession of Christianity; but, in the year 1065, he was killed while saying mass by some Pagans whom he had been endeavouring to convert. A Priest named Hippo suffered with him, killed also at the altar; and

* Inquiry into the History and Theology of the ancient Vallenses and Albigenses, &c., by George Stanley Faber, B.D., book ii., chap. 4; Maitland, Albigenses and Waldenses, sect. iv.; Fleury, Hist. Eccles., lviii., 53—55.

† Fleury, Hist. Eccles., lix., 7.

many others, both lay and cleric, were at the same time put to death. John, an aged Scotch Bishop, who had baptized many thousands, was beaten with rods, led about several towns amidst the derision of the Heathen, and, as he remained steadfast in confessing the faith of Christ, they first cut off his hands and feet, and then beheaded him, and presented his head before the image of one of their gods. The widow of Gotteschalc was subjected to shameful indignities; the savages overran the entire province of Hamburg with fire and sword, and razed the city to the ground. Schleswig, too, fell a prey to their fury, and all who persisted in professing Christianity were massacred. The Sclavonians altogether returned to Heathenism, as they had done twice before, after having apparently abandoned it in compliance with the will of Charlemagne and Otho.*

But the less than half-converted Europeans were everywhere sinking towards their original condition, and the forms of Christianity were strangely mingled with those of the old idolatry. Two memorable examples will serve to characterize the age. The Popes of Rome had, for some time past, been anxious to supersede the ancient Spanish, or Mozarabic, Liturgy by their own Roman; and Gregory VII., with characteristic perseverance, urged the adoption of his Breviary on the Spanish Sovereigns, but without success. At length the question was brought to a final discussion at Toledo, in the presence of Alfonso, King of Castile, who had recently recovered that city from the Saracens. On an appointed day the King and Queen, who both desired the innovation, the Archbishop, the Legate, the Clergy, and an immense multitude of people, were gathered together to determine whether the old book or the new should be the standard of their devotions. The Clergy, the representatives of the army, and the chief of the people contended during some hours for the preservation of their national formulary; while the King, supported by Papal authority, and excited by his wife, urged the adoption of the other, and spared not threatenings to the terror of the people. Neither party would give way; and it was gravely determined that two soldiers should be chosen to settle the matter at once by single combat. The champions were elected; the great assemblage deferred the choice of their prayers to the issue of the fight; and the sponsor of the Gothic form vanquished him of the Roman amidst the loud exultation of army, Priests, and people. But Queen Constance besought her consort not so readily to yield, but to try his cause by fire. The public assented; and the Priests, tolerably certain of good success, prepared to submit their devotionary to the searching test. The Primate, the Legate, and the Clergy united in exhorting the people to prepare themselves by prayers and fasting for a second appointed day. A pile of wood was kindled, and, when in hottest conflagration, the two books were thrown into the flames. To the admiration of the uninstructed, neither was consumed. The Roman, warped by the heat, showed a slight motion; the Gothic was singed a little on the surface; but both were taken entire from the embers. The Roman, having endured the trial without any visible change, was

* Fleury, Hist. Eccles., lxi., 17.

received generally; but the Gothic, or Mozarabic, being singed, yet otherwise uninjured, was deemed worthy of preservation on a few altars, and is to this day honoured with occasional recitation in Toledo. The King gave this decision, establishing the pleasure of the Pope in his dominions; and on that day originated the Spanish proverb, *Allá van leyes, do quieren Reyes*, "When Kings say whither, the laws go thither."* No doubt the King believed himself to be pronouncing truly when he said that both rituals pleased God, and the people were sincerely persuaded that they had seen a twofold miracle; but the cunning clerics had used the interval appointed for prayer and fasting to prepare the volumes by a solution that would make them fire-proof.† Despite the prohibitions of Popes and Councils, "a great fire" often superseded the only and legal methods of obtaining real evidence; for the elements were thought to be all under angelic influence, either malign or beneficent; and in that mysterious world, where natural and supernatural were intimately confounded, they fancied that God held a tribunal, to be approached with confidence of receiving an infallible decision. A Bishop of Florence, usually called Peter of Pavia, was accused of simony; and so notorious were his simoniacal practices, that a considerable portion of the Clergy separated from him, and the people commonly called him Simon Magus. But the higher Clergy and the Pope supported him, as it might be expected that accomplices would do; and the Florentines, disgusted with the man, took occasion during the solemnities of Lent, 1067, to appear in sackcloth, with lamentations, and cry to God for deliverance from "Simon the Magician." The churches were closed, the belfries silent, and a large body of Clergy, followed by a dense multitude, appeared at the gate of the monastery of St. Salvatore to demand an audience of the Friars there living in community. They were all fasting. Florence was under a voluntary interdict: no mass, no meal. Even the sucking babes were denied their mothers' breasts; and the brethren of St. Saviour were entreated to prepare a great fire. The same request had been made in vain to the Bishop; who, of course, refused to hazard his bishopric, perhaps his life, on the event of an ordeal which others must prepare; but the Abbot signified the consent of his brotherhood to take part in the awful ceremony, and one of them, also called Peter, readily presented himself to pass through the fire, and therein to be consumed if the Bishop were innocent of simony. His appearance, as a living man, should prove Peter of Savoy to be guilty. Faggots were brought in from all directions, and the people raised two piles, each ten feet long, five broad, and four and a half high; a narrow passage between them was covered with dry wood; and during the construction of the pyre psalms and litanies were chanted. Peter then went to the altar of the convent church, by order of the Abbot, to celebrate mass, which was performed with great solemnity, many of the people and

* Joan. Pinii Tractatus de Liturgia Mozarabica, Romæ, p. xlv., seq.; Mariana, Hist. Esp., lib. ix., cap. 18.

† Beckmann, History of Inventions, Jugglers, Rope-dancers, Automata, &c., and notes, Bohn's edition.

Priests weeping through excitement. When they came to the words, *Agnus Dei*, "Lamb of God," four Monks went to light the faggots, one carrying a crucifix, another holy water, the third twelve consecrated candles, and the fourth a censer full of incense. The people raised a shout as they appeared; chanted *Kyrie eleëson*, "Lord, have mercy upon us," in a mournful tone; and then prayed to Jesus Christ to defend his cause, and to the Virgin, St. Peter, and St. Gregory, to assist by their intercession. Next came Peter, carrying a cross, and followed by Abbots and Monks chanting a litany. Silence being had, a strong-voiced Monk read up a prayer, to which all signified assent. Then an Abbot raised his voice, and said, "My dear brethren and sisters, God is our witness that we do this for the salvation of your souls, that you may henceforth avoid simony, with which nearly the whole world is infected: for you must know that this crime is abominable, and that others are almost nothing in comparison." The burning was by that time beginning to abate, and the heap glowed red. Then the champion, by order of the Abbot, made his prayer: "O Lord Jesus Christ, I beseech thee that if Peter of Pavia has usurped the see of Florence by simony, thou wouldst succour me in this terrible judgment, and preserve me from the power of the fire, as thou didst of old preserve the three children in the furnace." When all present had said "Amen," he gave his brethren the kiss of peace, and asked the people how long he should stay in the fire: they answered, "As long as you can walk slowly through." Fixing his eyes on the cross, he walked steadily through, with his feet bare, emerged at the further end, looked gaily around, and returned to the middle of the burning path to pick up his handkerchief which he had let fall there. He would have gone in again, but the bystanders prevented him, covered him with kisses from head to foot, pressed on him to touch if it were but the hem of his garment; and a deafening cry proclaimed Peter the Monk blessed, and Peter the Magician a detestable simoniac. The Pope ventured to confirm the sentence, and to depose the Prelate, who covered himself under a profession of repentance, turned Monk, found bread in a monastery, and "Peter the Catholic" follows next on the catalogue of Florentine Bishops, in ostentatious contrast with his less fortunate predecessor, "Peter the Simoniac."* The monastic juggler is immortalized in Italian history as "fiery Peter," and completes the triad. These ordeals are described at length to supersede any further description of such ceremonies, and to convey a distinct idea of one of the instruments used on subsequent occasions for the suppression of truth, or the ruin of obnoxious persons. Silver and steel, fire and sword, were now the acknowledged resource and weapons of the church militant. Simony, acknowledged by the above-mentioned Abbot as almost universal, was inseparable from a church which had become wholly secular. Pagans were dragooned into submission to that church, and Jews were robbed, tormented, and murdered beyond all example in the preceding history of Christendom. At Rome, for

* Fleury, Hist. Eccles., lxi., 27, 28; Moreri, s. v., Pedro del Fuego; Macquer, Hist. Eccles.

example, there was a shock of earthquake on Good Friday, just after *the worship of the cross;* a wretched Jew said that some of his brethren had laughed at a crucifix, and that the earth had trembled with horror at their profanity. The Pope informed himself of the *truth* of the information, and instantly had a few Jews' heads taken off: the weather, which was tempestuous at the time, forthwith became serene, public vengeance was satisfied, the cross was adored with tenfold assiduity, the Jews were hated more intensely than ever, and the end of the invention was fully answered.* Coercion by brute force was used over the inferior Clergy, to compel the licentious to put away their concubines, and the honest to repudiate their wives: force was often resisted by equal or superior force, and lives were sacrificed in Italy itself during the discreditable conflict.† In Germany there was a formal revolt of "concubinary Clerks," as married Ministers were ignominiously designated; and finding that scriptural argument had no weight with their superiors, they forcibly dispersed a Council which met at Erfurt, in 1074, to devise methods of compulsion, leaving the Archbishop of Mayence, as ex-President of that Council, to anathematize them once a year, amidst the derision of their wives and children.‡

The too successful contention of Gregory VII. with the Sovereigns of Christendom for the confirmation of ecclesiastical prerogatives, and the interminable controversy respecting investitures, cannot be related intelligibly on pages which must be principally occupied by other subjects; but the student of church history will find abundant material for reflection in the annals of the *eleventh* century, by whomsoever edited or compiled. The Crusades must now engage our attention for a few moments. Sylvester II. had called for pity towards the suffering Christians of the East, so that Europe was already prepared to entertain the project, when Gregory, amidst his innumerable schemes for aggrandizement, for some time cherished this also. He corresponded on the subject with the Greek Emperor, Michael, who had thought it politic to solicit his sympathy, and wrote urgent letters to the Emperor of the West, and others, asking for assistance; saying that fifty thousand men were already anxious to set out on the holy war, if *he* would march at their head, which he would gladly do, if he could have increased co-operation. But the grand idea of a universal arming of the church for the destruction of Saracen, Pagan, and schismatic, was not carried into experiment until nearly twenty years later, in the pontificate of Urban II. A French pilgrim at Jerusalem, mingling with the crowd of devotees who visited the spot reputed to be the sepulchre of Christ, "the holy sepulchre," beheld with grief the injuries suffered by the Christian population and the pilgrims. Encouraged by the Patriarch, he hastened his return to Europe; and, in the twofold character of pilgrim and hermit, threw himself at the feet of Urban, who received him as a chosen messenger of God, and encouraged him to arouse Christendom to vengeance on the Saracenian tyrants who desecrated the holy city. Although Peter was mean in personal appearance, the

* Fleury, Hist. Eccles., lviii., 42. † Ibid., lxi., 25. ‡ Ibid., lxii., 12.

one idea that possessed his whole soul gave extraordinary power to his utterance; rusticity of manners and extreme asceticism made him the more acceptable to the multitude; while the force of his appeals, and the grandeur of his favourite conception, captivated persons of the highest rank. Immense congregations heard his descriptions with amazement, caught his indignation, and groaned with impatience to reconquer the "glorious resting-place" of their Saviour's body, and avenge the oppressions of Christian people. While Peter traversed his native country, everywhere kindling a flame of popular enthusiasm, the Pope convened a Council at Placentia, in Italy; and then, by adjournment, at Clermont, in France, where hundreds of Prelates, with Princes and soldiers, and uncounted multitudes of spectators, conducted or witnessed the discussion of various measures of external reform, all subsidiary to the object of sending a great army to Palestine for the conquest of the land, and the expulsion of the infidels. From a platform erected in the market-place the Pope harangued the people, who needed no persuasion; and the acclamation of that day, "God wills it," was adopted as the cry to be repeated on the fields of battle. Urban desired them to wear on the breast, or shoulder, a red cross;—the cross as the symbol of redemption, the colour to signify the sacrifice of blood offered in the cause of the Crucified;—and promised plenary indulgence to every one who should set out with the sacred host, and the glory of martyrdom beside to every one who should die in the service of the Cross. Nothing could be more agreeable to myriads than predatory warfare, no penitential toil more adapted to their ferocious propensities; and where there existed less courage, restless conscience, aroused, but unenlightened, by the strange fanaticism, rejoiced in the prospect of a new and glorious method of salvation. The immediate effect of these incitements was the assemblage of a vast and promiscuous multitude, gathered by families, encumbered by the infirmities of age and sex, and without any knowledge of geography or tactics to serve them on their military pilgrimage. In the wilds of Hungary, on the Thracian mountains, along the broad and uncertain tracks towards the passage of the Bosphorus, and on the plain of Nice, where the more hardy remnant were surrounded and cut to pieces by the Turks, the wretched horde fell victims to their fantastic zeal. But the example of their departure had roused others into action; and from France, Piedmont, Lombardy, the Italian peninsula, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, England, and even from Scotland and Ireland, by various routes, with diverse fortunes, and after great losses, the various sections of *croisés*, or persons marked with the red cross, were encamped under the walls of Constantinople, to the terror of the Emperor Alexius, who had asked for some addition to his own forces to counteract the power of the Mussulmans, which then threatened his metropolis and empire; but saw, instead of a reasonable contingent, such an immense array of warriors as, if well disciplined and conducted, might have been a resistless enemy; in whose good faith, as mere allies, he could place no confidence, and whose necessities it could not be possible for him long to satisfy. The complication of

intrigues arising from his well-grounded jealousy is traced by the historians of the Crusades. The pilgrim host was at last mustered on Asiatic ground, to the number, it was said, of one hundred thousand fighting men, mounted and equipped, besides armed foot-pilgrims, estimated so high as six hundred thousand; but certainly a formidable army, if the term "army" could fairly be applied to an assemblage so undisciplined. Nice fell before them; but Alexius, their doubtful ally, contrived to plant *his* standard on the walls; then Antioch, and finally Jerusalem. Never did an infuriated army dishonour humanity more deeply than the depraved zealots who sacked that city. For three days they toiled in the horrid work of carnage. Seventy, some say one hundred, thousand vanquished and unresisting Saracens, men, women, babes,—for there was no pity,—perished by the Christian sword. The Jews were thought deserving a special mark of abhorrence, and therefore burnt alive in their synagogues. Even a company of three hundred Moslems, to whom two of the Chiefs had given a standard as a pledge of exemption from the slaughter, were brought out and murdered. When the greater part of this butchery was finished, and the air was already infected, the Christians put off their blood-soaked garments, washed themselves, left Saracen slaves to carry away the bodies of the slain, with bare feet and uncovered heads went up the hill of Calvary, reciting solemn anthems, and devoutly kissed the stone which was said to have covered the sepulchre of our Lord. One shudders in thinking of the horrid details boastfully related by crusaders themselves; but we may again rejoice in the consideration that those men were not indeed soldiers of the Cross, that their religion was anything but Christianity, and that the teaching of Him in whose name they played the demon, and the known spirit of His holy religion, are as opposite to those deeds as heaven is to hell. We blush not for them, although we may weep over the record of their madness and obduracy; for "they were none of His." The Crusades were not a work of Christianity, but of dark fanaticism; and whatever of good there may have been in the first intention, it was utterly lost in the wickedness of those who were impelled by the eloquence of the hermit, the authority of the Pope, and perhaps actuated in some slight degree by pity for afflicted brethren. Who can calculate the injury done to the cause of Christ in Asia by the traditional abhorrence of those murderous avengers? As might have been expected, the sensuality of the crusaders was as gross as their thirst of blood was intense; their ambition and avarice were insatiate; and when their arms were not employed together for the destruction of the Saracen, they turned them against each other in quarrels of cupidity, jealousy, and revenge. He who so loved us that he endured the cross and despised the shame at Jerusalem, was thus dishonoured in that city in the last year of the eleventh century.* The writer of this brief notice would gladly have enjoyed the poetry, the ideal romance, of that part of medieval history. He might pleasantly have borrowed ideas of the Crusades from Tasso, who tells us that he invoked his muse among the blessed choirs of heaven, wearing of

* Mills, History of the Crusades; Gibbon, Decline and Fall, &c., chap. lviii.

stars immortal the golden diadem, and breathing celestial ardour into the poet's breast;* but it would be heartless affectation to whiten and adorn the sepulchre, forgetful of the unpitied victims whose remains lie mouldering within.

English history at this time affords little to our purpose. Canute the Dane, having completed the conquest of England, took the church under his unremitting care. After spending about fifteen years in the consolidation of his kingdom, he went to Rome, "to pray for the forgiveness of his sins, for the safety of his dominions, and for the people under his government." He there, in imagination, adored the Apostles Peter and Paul, and a multitude of other saints, who seemed to have revisited that holy city. At their altars or shrines he deposited costly gifts, acknowledged the power of Peter and his successors over the kingdom of heaven, conferred with the Emperor Conrad, who was there during the solemnities of Easter; and obtained from him and one Rodolfo, "a King," and other Princes, promise of greater freedom for his subjects on pilgrimage towards Rome through their territories, and from the Pope, John XX., another promise of reduction of charges on the English Clergy. The return rendered to His Holiness for that concession was not merely a vow to reform his life, but the proceeds of a rigorous exaction, from the nobles and people of England, of "the pence owing to Rome for St. Peter, whether from cities or villages; and, in the middle of August, the tenth of the produce of the earth; and, on the festival of St. Martin, the first-fruits of seeds, to the church of the parish where each one resided, which was called in English *circset*." Returned home, he enriched Coventry with the arm of St. Augustine, bought at Pavia with a hundred talents of silver, and a talent of gold, of his subjects' money. For the love of heaven, for the pardon of his sins, and the remission of the transgressions of his deceased brother Edmund, he granted to the church of "the holy Mother of God, Mary," at Glastonbury, various perquisites, and immunity of its lands from all claim and vexation, equally with his own, confirming the exclusive jurisdiction of the "island" of Glastonbury to the Abbot and convent.† The Clergy were supreme. Bishops and Abbots were the fountains of dignity, as well as the guides of conscience; and their hands dispensed the honour of knighthood, together with sacraments and absolution.‡ When the Normans conquered England, they came under the blessing of Pope Alexander II., who had sent a consecrated banner to Duke William,§ afterwards the Conqueror; and William accepted and acted on the Laws of King Edward, wherein it is affirmed, that "the King, because he is the Vicar of the highest King, is appointed for this purpose, to rule the earthly kingdom and *the Lord's people;* and, above all

* "Ma su nel cielo infra i beati cori
Hai di stelle immortali aurea corona;
Tu spira al petto mio celesti ardori."
Gierusalemme Liberata, i., 2.

† William of Malmesbury, book ii., chap. 11.

‡ Ibid., book iv., chap. 1.

§ Foxe, Acts and Monuments, book iii., A.D. 1066. William the Conqueror.

things, to reverence his holy church, to *govern it* and to defend it from all injuries; to pluck away wicked doers, and *utterly to destroy them.*"* The Conqueror, however, maintained the regal dignity, in relation to the priesthood, far more than his Danish predecessors; and his son Rufus went so far as to prohibit all persons, both lay and clerical, from making appeals to Rome, or even going thither without royal permission. His evil passions, no doubt, had something to do with this hostility to the Pope; and Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, had reason to complain of the King's tyranny when he embarked penniless at Dover, to lay a complaint before his ecclesiastical Chief. And here it may be noted, that twelve years after the famous ordeal at Toledo to determine the superiority of the Roman Breviary or Missal,† the English Archbishop, writing to the Bishop of Naumburg on the subject of ritual uniformity, displays a spirit of liberality superior to his age. "Your Worship," he writes, "complaineth of the sacraments of the church, that they are not made everywhere after one sort, but are handled in divers places after divers sorts. And truly, if they were ministered after one sort, and agreeing through the whole church, it were good and laudable; yet, notwithstanding, because there be many diversities which differ not in the sum of the sacrament, in the strength of it, or in the faith, or else can be gathered into one custom, I think they are rather to be borne with in agreement of peace, than to be condemned with offence. For we have this from the holy fathers, that if the unity of charity be kept in the catholic faith, the diversity of customs hurteth nothing. But if it be demanded whereof this diversity of customs doth spring, I perceive no other cause thereof than the diversity of men's wits, which, although they differ not in strength and truth of the thing, yet they agree not in the fitness and comeliness of the ministering; for that which one judgeth to be meeter, oftentimes another thinketh to be less meet."‡ But Anselm was not always so liberal and gentle, as we soon shall see.

Notwithstanding the zeal of the crusaders for the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre, and the compassion excited by descriptions of the sufferings of pilgrims and others in Jerusalem, the civil condition of Christians in the East, with the exception now to be noticed, appears to have become very tolerable, and often equal to that of their Moslem neighbours. Conquered and tributary as they were, many of them at this time held the highest offices in the state, royalty alone excepted, and not only served in arms, but even commanded armies. They had not that zeal for the propagation of the Gospel which would have provoked persecution; submitting to refrain from external display by litanies, processions, or even crosses erected on churches, or carried through the streets, their worship was generally undisturbed,

* Foxe, Acts and Monuments, book iii., A.D. 1066. William the Conqueror. "Utterly to destroy them" is the phrase which, very slightly varied, occurs in all the engagements taken by both Princes and Bishops to their acknowledged Superior in Rome, for the extirpation of heretics.

† To confound the Breviary and Missal would *now* prove extreme ignorance; not so when speaking of a volume which partook of the character of both.

‡ Foxe's translation, Acts and Monuments, book iv., A.D. 1098. William Rufus

except in times of war; and both Mohammedans and Christians regarded each other with forbearance. The prevalent characteristic of the Oriental Christians was indifference. If the Patriarch of Jerusalem had deemed it prudent to recount, in his letters to the European Princes, a persecution which overwhelmed Jerusalem more than eighty years before, but was followed by the repentance of the persecutor; or if the western Clergy were not profoundly ignorant of eastern languages and history; that event would have been related by the chroniclers of the eleventh century with the usual decoration of portent and miracle. Their omission is supplied from other sources. In the year of the Arabs, 386, and of Christ, 1008, the Caliph Hakem began his reign in Egypt. His first Vizir was a Christian, for Christians were usually intrusted with that office; and when he had provoked the Egyptians to an insurrection by murdering a too faithful servant, Pahed, a Christian again, was hastily invested with "royal robes," and shown to the people as Vizir, in order to appease their fury by a popular appointment. After three years' favour, he, too, was killed, to satisfy two Arabs who were jealous of him; but who, being themselves raised to power over Syria and Egypt, equally oppressed both Mussulmans and Christians, until the sister of Hakem, by tears and entreaties, persuaded him to have one of them beheaded, which was done accordingly. The other soon suffered the same fate, and the people of both provinces were content. Manzur, a Christian, was then placed over the entire caliphate, and also became the object of incessant complaint, together with many Christians whom Hakem, with his characteristic versatility, caused to be scourged to death. Manzur himself was scourged until they thought him dead, and left him to be eaten by dogs; but as some one saw the body move, he was taken home, where he revived, and the Caliph endeavoured to compensate for the barbarous usage by receiving him to favour again, and, with the restoration of dignity, gave him a new name, *Sufficient*. The reign of Hakem was one of terror. As he rode on his ass through the streets at night, for he was fond of nocturnal rambling, people were afraid to approach to do him the accustomed honours, and the way was clear and silent. His pride grew to such a height, that he fancied the adorations performed in the presence of the Vicar of Mohammed, (resembling those which are still rendered to the pretended Vicar of Christ at Rome or elsewhere,) to be an acknowledgment of superhuman dignity, and was so weak as to avow what others may have imagined in their blindness, but not often ventured to express aloud. Among his servants were some who publicly addressed him as a god. "Peace to thee, thou only one and without companion; Peace to thee, O thou that killest and makest alive, and enrichest and makest poor;" and the idolatrous salutations were accepted with complacent smiles. One of his flatterers went to Mecca, struck the black stone in the Caaba with his lance, and then said to the bystanders, "Ye fools, why do ye worship a thing which cannot either do you good or harm, and forsake him in Egypt who can both kill and make alive." But the hero-god in Egypt heard that by the tricks of Monks in Jerusalem, the Christians there were

made to believe that in the church of the Holy Sepulchre celestial fire descended by miracle in answer to their invocations, (the same absurd fraud is performed there yearly, to the present time,) and, unable to brook the visible pretension of any other divinity to receive popular adoration, he commanded that church to be emptied of its furniture, and then razed to the foundations. The command was readily executed; thousands of other churches throughout his dominions were levelled to the ground; and criers everywhere proclaimed his pleasure, that all Christians and Jews should embrace the faith of the Arabs, and accept honours and rewards, or be exposed to shame. The Christians who would not renounce their faith were required to wear a cross, suspended from the neck; the Jews, an image of a calf's head, in memory of the golden calf which their fathers worshipped in the desert. Neither Jew nor Christian should wear rings, nor ride on horse-back. They might only mount mules or asses, without saddles of the kind in general use, and with wooden stirrups. Many left his dominions, a few apostatized, the remainder wore ornamental crosses, and rode on ornamented saddles of a new sort, and the Jews carried a small trinket fashioned after the pattern prescribed by Hakem; but the tyrant was moved to anger at the partial evasion of his edict, and compelled them, under pain of death, to wear wooden crosses, each weighing four pounds, by the Bagdad standard,* and the calf's head was to be of similar material, and equal weight. After a few years, however, he condescended to recall the decree, and allow the reluctant proselytes to profess Christianity and Judaism again, the exiles to return, and the churches to be rebuilt in better style than before. When he had reigned five years longer, worshipped by the court and their adherents, and detested by the nation, letters were frequently presented to him during his nightly rides, which, read within doors, disclosed the bitter hatred of all classes of his subjects. Anonymous charges against favourites, the work of malevolence as well as revenge, were mingled with imprecations on himself. Burning with anger, having no certain object on which to wreak punishment, and tormented with suspicion, his sister, who, at the commencement of his reign, had persuaded him to murder the Governor of Syria, became a chief object of distrust. Aware of her danger, she hurried away to the house of one of the chief men, whose life was also threatened, contrived a plan by which to murder Hakem that very night; and when going to a neighbouring hill to gaze on the stars, for he was a superstitious astrologer, riding on his ass, and attended by a little boy, it is said that he commanded his other servants to remain at the foot of the hill, ascended to the top, dismounted, and, seated on the ground, anxiously fixed his eyes on the starry firmament. Turning eastward, he saw Mars just risen above the horizon. Astrology had no bright omen for him, nor conscience any comfort. "Art thou up?" he muttered, "art thou up, thou cursed star, shedder of blood? My hour is come." He might have remembered that it was written in his horoscope, that if he should escape peril on a

* The Bagdad *litra*, or "pound," is supposed to have been between twelve and thirteen ounces.

certain night, or, as his historian writes it, if the cup of that hour should pass from him, he would live eighty years. But shall he escape? He sat with fixed gaze on the ascending star: the hour was indeed come; two hired ruffians, concealed near the spot, threw a cord on his neck from behind, and strangled him. No cry betrayed the deed. The little boy was killed, and the beast hamstrung. The body of the god, the killer and the reviver, was conveyed to his sister's dwelling. The next morning various rumours unsatisfactorily accounted for his disappearance. His sister set abroad the notion that he had killed the boy to prevent discovery, and then gone into the desert for meditation. This gained credit with many, and was eagerly caught by his admirers; for fanaticism had been mixed with pride, and gained even him a few deluded followers; and to this day the Druses on Mount Lebanon, and even in India, believe that Hakem did not die, but disappeared; that he still lives, will return when it pleases him, will reign over all the earth, throughout all ages; that men of all other sects and religions will be subjected to him, put in irons and laid under tribute; but that the *Unitarians*, as they call themselves, will reign with him throughout all ages. This singular sect, we may add, is a living evidence of the most remarkable imposture of the darkest period in the history of the Christian church, and a humiliating example of the imbecility of our fallen nature.*

We must not hurry over the *twelfth* century. Observing the sequence of events from the twelfth to the nineteenth, we recognise the beginnings of the great social renovation now in happy progress; and although it is too early to speak of "the dawn of the Reformation," or to select any eminent person who shall be honoured as the "morning star" of the day now brightening to its noon, it is not too early to discern the hand of God, in sovereign energy, preparing instruments, if not yet raising up the living agents who are to rebuild his ruined church. The human mind begins to awaken from its lethargy. Not generally, not in the masses of the people, not in the thousands of the Clergy, not exclusively among Christians; but where Christianity is prostrate, extinct, or alien as yet, where the ultimate benefit of this increasing mental activity cannot appear to human foresight, the Father of spirits is gently awakening the world from the mental slumber of many ages. After the Saracens had thrown down the feeble barriers which opposed their progress, and possessed an empire exceeding the Roman in geographical extent, and scarcely inferior to it in grandeur, although less famous by classical association, and less familiar to the people of the western world; they cultivated, in various degrees, the arts of peace. In Spain, where no desert lay to receive tents like those of the Arabian nomades, and where, instead of the neighbourhood of savages like those of Africa, the valour of France, and the indomitable courage of the Spanish

* Abulpharagius, Dynast. x., Jowett, Researches in Syria, (Druses,) and Milman, Gibbon, vol. x., pp. 363—365, have supplied this account of Hakem. The Exposé de la Religion des Druses, by M. Silvestre de Sacy, 2 vols., Paris, 1838, which the author has not seen, will probably give the most complete information both of Hakem and his sect.

mountaineers in the northern marches and the Pyrenees, commanded their respect; and the multitude of Spanish subjects compelled them to a course of moderate government; they became more reflective, grew familiar with subjects hitherto unknown, and, by their occupation of Greece also, conceived a desire of perusing the histories, philosophical treatises, and even poems written in the language of that country. Interpreters were always ready to transfer the speculations of Plato and Aristotle to the sublime vernacular of the European caliphate, and to render the problems of Euclid intelligible to the Arab who watched the stars from the plains of Sinaar. A *science* of medicine, however imperfect, succeeded to empiricism. Chemistry, although struggling at its birth with alchemy, was pursued in laborious experiment; and astronomy, although charmed by the reveries of the astrologist, and mistaken for magic by the vulgar, was really studied under the light of pure geometry. Christians began to frequent the colleges of Cordova, where they could not lose much religion, having but little or none to lose; but gained knowledge, or at least acquired the habit of study. By this intellectual commerce, the horizon of science, and the field of labour, became suddenly enlarged.* Nor were the Jews inactive in this important change. Never since the dispersion of the academies of Babylon and Tiberias had literature, crude and unsatisfying as it was, made any progress among them: but it now revived; and Jarchi, Aben Ezra, David Kimchi, and Maimonides, to say nothing of men of inferior note, were ornaments of that age; men of extensive travel and unwearied industry, whose volumes still adorn our libraries, and whose labours facilitate our studies.† In Constantinople, too, Christian literature, in a garb of Attic elegance, was cultivated under the patronage of the Patriarch Anchialus, jealous of the counteractive influence of the Latin Church, and encouraged by the example of the Princess Anna Comnena, as it had been by that of the Empress Eudocia; while the voluminous productions of Suidas, Tzetzes, and others, attest their industry.‡ An eminent political writer, still living, marks this as the period of "a vivid aspiration after freedom of thought" in France;§ and the future originators of the University of Paris, the first established in the world, were already surrounded by disciples in the schools of that city. Scholastic theology, with all its defects, both of material and method, first arose in the schools of the twelfth century, and, at least, indicated a transition from torpor into life. There were some intervening ages of subtle and angry disputation, serving to put away indifference, if not to increase knowledge; and scholasticism, no longer esteemed, having finished its work, in our day exists only within the covers of tomes unread. Happily for the cause of revealed religion, a set of commentators arose simultaneously with the dialecticians; and although their com-

* Gibbon, chap. lii., a trusty guide where Christianity is not in the way, well compendiates the materials of extensive reading; and his notes point out abundant sources of information to learned inquirers into the history of Arabian learning.

† Schoettgen, Rabbinicarum Lectionum lib. i., cap. iii., sect. 2; Lindo, History of Spanish Jews, chap. vii., viii.

‡ Mosheim, Eccles. Hist., cent. xii., part ii., chap. i.; Gibbon, chap. liii.

§ Guizot, Civilization in France, first Lecture.

ments were fantastical, and seldom contained sentences of real exposition, they tended to preserve the inspired volume from utter neglect, and by rendering, or professing, deference to divine authority, so far maintained a principle which contentious Ecclesiastics had for ages overlooked. But the lucubrations of schoolmen, the cabalistic ingenuities of Monkish commentators, the various studies pursued at Cordova, Paris, or Bologna, were only influential on a select minority of the Clergy, and a few laymen who left promiscuous society to form a circle of their own. The new light was too feeble to illuminate society; and, therefore, a note of the historical importance of these beginnings of intellectual action must not lead to the expectation that we shall find the masses of any country perceptibly improved by them. When minds of some energy, yet not cultivated by the study of authentic history or true science, nor enlightened by theology, nor learned from the Bible, nor hallowed by the influence of God's Holy Spirit, perceived the vices of the priesthood and the absurdities of the doctrine received as Catholic, they could produce nothing better than antagonist error, wild and grotesque creations of their own, which entertained multitudes passive to every casual impression, and strengthened the pretext of the Clergy to persecute and to calumniate. The Pasagini in Lombardy, and the Caputiati in France, seem to be complete examples of this kind of reaction;* and it must be acknowledged, that among the sects which are classed by the Romanists as heretical, a few which are claimed by some of ourselves as kindred reformers, although worthy of honourable remembrance on account of their honest avowal of sentiments which exposed them to persecution even unto death, were undoubtedly heretical on some important points; and, like men of extreme views in all ages, carried their dissent from one kind of error so far as to fall into the opposite. Many of their followers believed in two principles, or, to speak more intelligibly, in two gods; uttering openly the proposition which the whole brood of Monkery condemned in words, but acted out in practice, that an evil god was the creator of the world, author of carnal infirmities and passions, and to be renounced in the renunciation of marriage, and abstinence from the ordinary comforts, if not the necessaries, of life. Because the priesthood was corrupt, they poured contempt on the idea of a Christian ministry, which we know to be an institution perfectly distinct from the sacrificers and official rulers of conscience, with whom alone they were acquainted. Seeing that the sacraments of the eucharist and baptism were substituted for those originally appointed, they simply rejected them, without attempting to restore the others. In their disgust at materialism, as developed in the common worship, they denied that our Lord had been incarnate in a substantial body; and in their horror of idolatry they not only taught that images should be destroyed, but that churches should be demolished. Some, paying blind and indiscriminate deference to the Old Testament, would have revived Judaism; others, in headlong zeal for the Gospel, would have severed it from the law, and obliterated the Old Testament altogether. Conscientiously interpreting *one* sentence of holy Scripture,

* Mosheim, cent. xii., part 2.

which perplexed the ignorant, and forgetful of others which ought to be collated with it, they refused to be sworn judicially; and dwelling on the image of a "natural face," referred to by St. James, nourished their beards with sacred scrupulosity. And not a few, mixing together heavenly and earthly notions, contended for the abolition of the magistracy as well as of the priesthood. Individual fanatics there were in the middle age, as well as now; their names are recorded; and the cruelties inflicted on them were outrages on our common humanity; but their vagaries are not taken into account in this description of the darker side of the dissent of the twelfth century. It is only necessary to observe, that the difference between the profession of those extreme and eccentric notions then and at the present day, consists chiefly in that they were then propagated with undue zeal, and opposed with ferocious cruelty, now they are thrown into the shade, a few instances excepted, by the good sense and truly Christian piety of the excellent men who entertain them. But still, as the writer ventures to believe, they are the effects of reaction, and will pass away as the church of Christ becomes more diligent in the performance of the great work confided to her hands.

Now to the brighter side. Even the extravagancies of a half-awakening age are better than death; and after death has brooded over the pulpit for ages, the slightest token of revival there is most encouraging. Such a token we find in the history of Foulques de Neuilly. In the village of Neuilly on the Marne, not far from Paris, a parish Priest of obscure parentage and extreme ignorance was conspicuous only by scandalous immorality of life. By some means not recorded, he was moved to compunction. He felt himself to be a degraded sinner; and the sincerity of his conviction was evidenced by reformation of his conduct, and assiduity in the discharge of his parochial duties. He began to preach with earnestness, not only in the church, but probably in the open air,* agreeably to universal custom, exhorting the people to despise the things of this world. He reproved sinners with severity, especially attacking usurers and women of loose character, probably his former associates. His style was rude, for it scarcely could have been other, and unsparing reproofs, launched forth on persons of all classes, brought upon him the contradiction and contempt of all; and the labour of two years was not rewarded with any visible fruit. But contradiction and contempt did him good, by convincing him of his ignorance, at least; and he was therefore used to walk into Paris, take a seat among the students in the schools of theology, and place in a note-book, not analyses of the lectures, a performance to which he was probably unequal, but passages of Scripture, striking sentences, and moral maxims. On each Sunday he delivered the fruit of his week's application, and repeated the weighty sentences with the full advantage of hallowed earnestness. Peter the Chanter, a celebrated lecturer, known by his works as an expositor, to the best of his knowledge, of holy Scripture, marked the village Priest, soon became interested in the advancement of his auditor, and engaged him to preach in the church of St. Severin in Paris, in his pre-

* "—— aux environs."

sence, and in that of many students. The village Priest spoke with so much eloquence and power, that his master and the other hearers declared that the Holy Spirit had spoken by his lips; and from that time the Doctors and their disciples crowded to hear his sermons, simple and homely as they were. But the very homeliness and common sense of those addresses commended them the more; so different were they from the intricate effusions of the wise men of the day, ponderous and dead, with divisions, sub-divisions, allegories, common-places, and dull alliterations, playing on the words of Scripture with no sobriety of reason, with not a breath of influence.* One day, as Foulques was preaching at Paris in the *place de Champeaux*, a market-place, before a great multitude of Clergy and people, he spoke with so much force, that many, stung with compunction, rushed to his feet, spoiled themselves of their garments; and bare-foot and half naked, with rods and thongs in their hands, publicly confessed their sins, and besought him to direct them what they should do. The astonished Preacher knew not how to lead them to our only Saviour; but he gave thanks to God, embraced the penitents, did not enforce penance, but counselled the usurers and thieves to make restitution. Prostitutes cut off their hair, forsook their sin; many of them were afterwards married at his hands, and others took refuge in an asylum which he provided for them, aided by the charity of admiring citizens. From that time the Parisian Preachers thronged to hear him, wrote down his sayings, and endeavoured to repeat them in their pulpits; but what flashed with resistless energy from the lips of Foulques, was tamely ridiculous when doled out from theirs. They mimicked his intonations and aped his gestures; but all was vain: they had no power, they could not gather congregations. "Be short," said he, "speak plainly and naturally; and cut off all vain subtilties and superfluous questions." Some, however, caught a little of his spirit; and Peter the Chanter, leaving his chair of divinity, Peter de Rouissi, two Abbots, the Archdeacon of Paris, and some others, did no less than form themselves into a company with the rustic orator at their head, and travel with him over France, preaching also. No doubt their endeavour was, to some extent, successful; but the Priest of Neuilly retained his pre-eminence; and at the invitation of Bishops, went preaching through France, Flanders, and a great part of Germany; and was received throughout his course as if he were an angel. Unhappily, he either pretended to work miracles, or was flattered into a belief that he could do so; and the biography which began in fact terminates in fiction. The fiction we do not copy. Men of his order were allowed entire freedom of speech; and an anecdote is related of him not less characteristic of the age than of the person. It is said that he addressed King Richard I. of England, in such words as these: "I am come to tell thee, from Almighty God, that thou hast three daughters, very vicious, whom thou must marry out, or it will be worse for thee." To which the King answered angrily: "Thou art

* Fleury, (Hist. Eccles., lxv., 12,) from whom this narrative is principally taken, cites the sermons of Pierre de Calles, Pierre de Blois, and Etienne de Tournai, as specimens.

a lying hypocrite, I have not one daughter." "You have three," persisted Foulques, "Pride, Avarice, and Uncleanness." "Well," said the King, turning to his Barons, "I give my pride to the Templars, my avarice to the Cistercian Monks, and my uncleanness to the Prelates of the Church." Rapid elevation to so much popularity and honour spoiled a well-meaning, but weak and unenlightened, man. Employed by the Papal Legate in France to preach a crusade, followed by a train of black and white Monks, and regular Canons, each bearing a red cross, and receiving the lavish offerings of devout crowds, who made him their treasurer for the "holy war," he became suspected of enriching himself at the expense of the cause, and gradually sank into obscurity again, leaving his tale to be told for the admonition of those who are in peril by popular applause. The impulse, however, given to the Preachers of France and Germany, could scarcely have been unproductive of good; for although the increasing power of the pulpit was abused to the propagation of error, and strengthened, for a time, the ascendancy of an ungodly priesthood, it invited the public mind to take some part in the reception of professedly sacred truths, and the ultimate result proved that that mind cannot be at the same time appealed to for assent, or even required to accept the lessons of authority, without relaxing, although imperceptibly, the trammels of passive acquiescence and implicit faith. The immediate consequence was, a bolder development of error, a multiplication of heretical sects, real or reputed. Some of the heretics, as they are called, no doubt deserved the name in its worst acceptation, while others are thought to have been calumniated by their persecutors; and as their case is often doubtful, and embarrassed by long controversy, it cannot be adequately represented by any statement sufficiently brief to consist with the character of our present work. The ambiguous sects and persons of the twelfth century may, therefore, pass unnoticed; leaving one heresy of Romanism, and some other elections of doctrine (αἱρέσεις) which merge into evangelical orthodoxy, if they do not unite with it, to be treated of with deliberate attention.

The fable of the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary, as it contradicts numerous passages of holy Scripture which declare the universality of original sin, is undoubtedly a heresy of Romanism.* In the year 1140 we find Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, censuring the Canons of Lyons for having introduced a festival into their church in honour of the immaculate conception of the mother of our Lord. The rise of this corrupt doctrine is frequently referred to this century, on account of the historical fact now mentioned; and as the persecuting spirit of the Roman Church, even towards its most eminent members, is seen in the history of the doctrine since made so prominent, we will trace its progress from the beginning until the present day. The beginning, however, strange to tell, is not found in any Father of the

* The books chiefly consulted in the preparation of this history of the doctrine of the Immaculate conception, are the Koran; Fleury's Histoire Ecclesiastique; Fra Paolo Sarpi, History of the Council of Trent, Courayer's French edition; Pallavicini, Hist. Conc. Tridentini; El Porque de la Iglesia, Barcelona, 1786; L'Enfant's Council of Constance.

church, but in the Koran of Mohammed. Possibly from some apocryphal Gospel no longer extant, or from his own imagination, which is more probable, the Arab drew the tale that Hannah, wife of Imrân, vowed to devote to God her yet unborn child; that when, with disappointment, she found it to be a female, she called her MARY, and commended her and her issue to the divine protection, "against Satan, driven away with stones;" alluding, at the same time, to a tradition that Abraham had driven away Satan with stones, and to the superstitious notion entertained by the old Arabians, by the Moslems, and also by the Church of Rome, that every child born into the world is touched or possessed by Satan, or an angel of Satan. He then describes the annunciation, almost in the language of the Evangelists, and the birth of "Christ Jesus, the Son of Mary." He affirms that God chose Adam, Noah, the family of Abraham, and the family of Imrân, above the rest of the world; that his wife Hannah was accepted with a gracious acceptance, caused to bear *an excellent offspring*, one that was *purified*, and that she became the mother of Jesus.* The vulgar tale of Joachim and Hannah is precisely similar to that of the Koran,† whence it must have been transfused into Christian traditions by the Saracens in Spain, during a long period of familiar intercourse. From Spain it would be carried into France, where the influence of the Moslem schools was powerfully felt; and the spirit of conciliation could not but gather strength from the production of such fragments of that sacred book as made honourable mention of the Christian Prophet, of his mother, and of her family. The excessive honour which was paid to Mary, and the protest against Nestorianism implied in the increasingly frequent use of the epithet, "mother of God," (*Mater Dei,*) in the Latin Church, as of "God-bearer," (Θεοτόκος,) in the Greek, encouraged the circulation of whatever fable tended to exalt her above women, and to bias the thoughts of those who reasoned on the sinless purity of the incarnate Son of God. One of those, Anselm, a native of France, already mentioned as Archbishop of Canterbury, after his visit to Rome from England, retired to an estate belonging to the monastery at Bec, and gave himself entirely to exercises of devotion, and to meditation on the mysteries of religion. There (A.D. 1098) he composed a tract, entitled, "Why did God become Man?" intended for infidels, and argumentative rather than scriptural, instructing his readers "not to arrive at faith by reason; but to understand and contemplate that which they believe, and to be able to render a reason of their faith to others." The infidels, according to the style of the Church, must have been the Jews and Mussulmans; and he, evidently in view of the latter, referred to the notion of the exemption of Mary from original sin, by answering an objection derived from the contrary idea of her sinfulness, in such terms as these: "Since it is certain that this man is God, and the author of the reconciliation of sinners, there can be no doubt that he is absolutely without sin; and we should not be perplexed because we cannot comprehend how he has been taken untainted from the sinful

* Koran, chap. iii., "The Family of Imrân."

† El Porque, &c., Tratado 4.

mass." He avoids speaking of Mary's original sin; but observes that she was of the number of those who were purified from sin by Jesus Christ, not saying *when*. This caution, however, was not long observed. The Saracenic invention found such favour with his countrymen, that in about forty years from the composition of that tract, the Canons of Lyons had so entirely made it their own, that they instituted a festival in honour of "the immaculate conception of the holy Virgin." Then it was (A.D. 1140, *circ.*) that Bernard addressed to them his famous letter, expressing great surprise that some among them should have introduced a new festival unknown in the usage of the Church, and neither authorized by reason nor tradition. "Are we wiser," he asked, "or more devout than our fathers? It is a dangerous presumption to meddle with matters which their prudence left untouched; and this is of such a nature that it could never have been overlooked by them. But you will say that the mother of God deserves great honours. You are quite right; but they should be rendered with judgment. She needs not false honour, covered as she is with titles of real dignity." He concedes that Mary, like Jeremiah and John the Baptist, *may have been* sanctified before her birth; but contends that such a sanctification could not have a retroactive effect on her conception, which he believes to have been in sin, according to the Scripture; and further argues that sanctification must have been either subsequent to conception, or anterior to it. If anterior, she must have been sanctified before she had a being, which was impossible; if subsequent, the conception was not immaculate. This dilemma could only be avoided by supposing her conception to have been miraculous; but he rightly maintains that "the privilege of being conceived without sin was reserved for Him alone who should sanctify all others; that is to say, for Jesus Christ, who alone was holy before conception." He reprobates innovation as "the mother of temerity, the sister of superstition, and the daughter of levity." In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries it is known that there were festivals in the Greek Church in honour of the conception of both John the Baptist and the Virgin, which were regarded merely as notable events,—yet some thought that observance to be ridiculous; and it is reported that there were such in Armenia; but without the notion of exemption from original sin. The superstition had taken root in France; but although, in the thirteenth century, (A.D. 1288,) a Bishop of Paris bequeathed a sum of money to keep up a special service in honour of the conception of the Virgin, theologians were far from giving their sanction to the novelty. Even John Duns Scott, a Scotchman, and Franciscan Monk, who taught first at Oxford, and then in the University of Paris, and through zeal against the Dominicans, who contended for the contrary, was exceedingly anxious to establish the new doctrine, could only plead, after acknowledging that it was commonly said that the Virgin was conceived in sin, that God *could* have exempted her entirely from original sin, or allowed her to be in sin but for an instant; or suffered her to be born in sin, and purified her afterwards; that God alone knew which of the three he had done; but that it seemed right to attribute to Mary that which is

most excellent, saving the authority of the Church, and of Scripture. (A.D. 1305 or 1306.) The Franciscans went beyond their Doctor in confidence as to the degree of probability; the University of Paris, supported by the reputation of the Franciscans for sanctity, accepted and defended the absurdity; and Scott, encouraged by their applause, is said to have withdrawn in Paris the modest qualification which appeared in his manuscript written at Oxford. The mention of a feast in honour of the conception of the Virgin, as observed in England, is not sufficient to prove that the notion of immaculacy was admitted here, any more than in Armenia, where it was unheard of. Although the Saracenic heresy was received so early in France, even there it soon became the subject of violent disputation. Juan de Monzon, a Spaniard, who had taught theology at Valencia, came to Paris, occupied a chair in that University, and gradually excited attention by the boldness of his propositions. Those propositions chiefly related to the authority of holy Scripture, and to the universality of original sin. He denied the exemption of the Virgin from the depravity and curse of our fallen nature, and pointed out the consequences that would follow from allowing that any mere human being was born without sin. The Dean desired him to retract this error, for so they called a plain declaration of the word of God; but he became more earnest than ever in teaching that all, even Mary, were born in sin, and shapen in iniquity. The majority of the Doctors were enraged, and threatened; but he was undaunted, and declared that he would rather die than suppress the truth. At last the University declared his doctrine to be false, presumptuous, scandalous, and contrary to the piety of the faithful. Pierre D'Orgemont, Bishop of Paris, as ordinary Judge in that case, had the judgment placed in his hands, and cited Juan de Monzon to appear before him; but the Professor, knowing that justice was not to be expected at that tribunal, disobeyed the summons. He was therefore forbidden to teach the obnoxious truths, under penalty of excommunication and imprisonment; and his life would have been taken, had not the Inquisitor been a Dominican, and therefore, agreeing with him on the single point that Mary was conceived in sin, refused to act. The confusion that followed was inconceivable. Those who embraced his doctrine suffered bitter persecution; and all that could not save themselves by flight were cast into prison. A few recanted, and among them a Bishop, the King's Confessor. The Dominicans were expelled the University; and as these were the Preachers, the men who prosecuted the work of pulpit renovation, begun by Foulques de Neuilly, and by many powerful adversaries of the priesthood, and who performed the double work of disputation and persecution for the suppression of heresy, yet happened to be now on the better side, the pulpits were deserted, the students were disgusted, and for many years the University languished, being almost unfrequented. From the Bishop of Paris, Juan de Monzon appealed to Clement VII., Pope, or Antipope, (for the Roman see was disputed by two aspirants,) then holding his court at Avignon; and the Pope wisely avoided hazarding his infallibility, by appointing a Committee to consider the fourteen propositions. After the Commit-

tee had entertained the case for about eighteen months, the University clamoured for a decision, and the Pope forbad the Professor to quit Avignon until the decision should be pronounced. Foreseeing that the University would obtain the sentence they desired, he left the court, placed himself under the jurisdiction of the other Pope, Urban VI., and vigorously maintained his doctrine by the pen. (A.D. 1387—1389.) The dispute thenceforth agitated all Popedom, and the immaculatists spared no pains in courting popularity and patronage. At the Council of Constance, (A.D. 1416,) the famous Gerson preached a sermon on the subject; but nothing resulted from his advocacy there. The Council of Basle went further, and, after hearing the report of a Cardinal who had been employed to search the libraries for evidence, as if the Bible contained none, declared (A.D. 1439) that "the opinion of the immaculate conception is pious, agreeable to the worship of the Church, right reason, and holy Scripture; that all Catholics should approve it; that no one should be permitted to preach or teach the contrary; that the feast of the conception should be celebrated everywhere on the 8th of December; that an office composed by John of Segovia should then be chanted; that indulgences should be given to all who went to church that day." After all, the legitimacy of the Council of Basle was disputed, as well it might be, and its declaration had little force. The University of Paris, however, settled their own faith by a juridical conversion of all new Bachelors and Doctors, who were sworn on admission after the following manner. The Dean interrogated thus: "Do you swear that you will abide by the decision of the faculty touching the immaculate conception of the holy Virgin Mary; that is to say, that she was preserved in her conception from the original stain?" The submissive Doctor or Bachelor answered, "I swear;" and thenceforth that was his faith, or he must bide the consequences. A little Council at Avignon (A.D. 1457) gave its entire deliberations to this subject, and propped up the doubtful work of its predecessor by a decree forbidding Priests and people to preach or speak to the contrary, under the dreadful penalty of excommunication. Strangely beset by the idea, its advocates missed no occasion of proclaiming it. The snows of the Appennines dissolving too rapidly, caused the Tiber to overflow its banks, and Pope Xystus IV. called on the worshippers of the *immaculate* to drive back the waters by supplications to the Queen of heaven. (A.D. 1475.) Of course, the inundation subsided just in proportion to the rapidity of its rise, and the fable passed into undoubted credit with the more ignorant Italians. Then rose a miraculous image of the immaculate "mother of God," and the following Bull was issued (A.D. 1483) to demonstrate the Mariolatry and the tyranny of Papal Rome:—"The holy Roman Church, having established the feast of the conception of Mary, without spot, and ever virgin, as also an office proper for this feast, we hear, notwithstanding, that some Preachers of different orders cease not to preach daily to the people that all who believe that the glorious Virgin was conceived without the stain of original sin, sin mortally, or are heretics; and that they who say the office or hear the sermons

of Preachers who teach the contrary, sin grievously. We, to arrest their presumptuous and scandalous proceedings, and to prevent the evils that might arise from them to the Church, by our own movement, and our certain knowledge, condemn the propositions of those Preachers who dare to affirm that they who preach the immaculate conception of the mother of God sin mortally; and that they who celebrate the office, or hear the sermons, are not exempt from sin. We declare those propositions to be false, erroneous, and quite contrary to the truth. We reprobate the books written against this doctrine, and their authors, whoever they may be, and we pronounce against them the penalty of excommunication, from which they shall not be absolved by any but the Sovereign Pontiff, and by him only in the article of death. And that no one may plead ignorance, we order all Ordinaries to publish this Bull in their parishes and diocesses at high mass and sermon. If any one presume to act, preach, or write against this decree, we declare that he shall incur the wrath of God, and of his Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul." Every genuine devotee of Rome must have bowed in silence before this terrible decree; but some there still were who presumed to involve even Popes in the charge of heresy and mortal sin. Such an one was Wigand, a Dominican of Frankfort, who, in an anonymous book, attacked Trithemius, author of a panegyric of St. Anna, Mary's mother, a person unmentioned until Epiphanius made her known in the fourth century; but anonymous antagonists, like blanched weeds, cannot flourish in daylight, and Wigand, being discovered, begged pardon of Trithemius. (A.D. 1494.) With signal constancy the University of Paris reiterated its thunders, whether to appal an imprudent Dominican, (A.D. 1497,) or to show resistance to the great Reformation in the person of Luther, (A.D. 1521,) until it was found to be resistless. Before the light of the Reformation, the dream of the immaculate conception had well-nigh passed away. The Council of Trent (A.D. 1546) was divided on the question, and would probably have passed over it in silence; but, after warm debate, and, as Fra Paolo says, without being contradicted by his antagonist, Pallavicini, *to obey the Pope*, they appended the following sentence to the decree on original sin:—"This holy Synod also declares that it is not its intention to comprehend in this decree, where original sin is treated of, the blessed and immaculate Virgin Mary, mother of God; (*Dei genitricem;*) but that the constitutions of Pope Xystus IV., of happy memory, are to be observed, under the penalties contained in the said constitutions." The Bull itself is before the reader, who there sees how the Church of Rome prepares persecution for its own more enlightened members. Thirty years had not elapsed from the decree of the Council of Trent, before the Jesuit Maldonat was censured by the University of Paris (A.D. 1575) for teaching that the doctrine was problematical; but the Bishop of Paris supported the Jesuit, and excommunicated the University. The question is now more unsettled than ever; and yet the present Pope, Pius IX., (A.D. 1849,) has solicited from all his Bishops assent to an ardent wish he entertains to have the adjective *immaculate* inserted in the Roman Liturgy.

Should they assent, the next step will be for them to add the "holy family" of Epiphanius, "the revelations" of St. Bridget, and "the family of Imrân" to the holy Gospels; those documents being classical in the history of the superstition.

We return to the twelfth century, and trace the dealings of the dominant Church with reputed heretics. The theological descendants of the Armenian Paulicians of the seventh century reappear from the eastern to the western extremity of Europe. At Constantinople they became well known from their great number in the neighbouring provinces, particularly Bulgaria, whence they were sometimes called Bulgarians, and at that time Bogomiles, from a phrase or epithet in their language which signified "prayer to God;" as a more ancient sect in the same country had been called Euchites, or Massalians,* that is, "praying people." From their enemies only we have the narrative of a persecution which they suffered in the reign of the Greek Emperor, the first Alexius Comnenus; but it is clear enough to show that they were victims of the most ruthless bigotry. They were acknowledged to be distinguished by the appearance of great piety, dressed plainly, were often observed to ejaculate prayer, and by their habit and gravity of deportment resembled Monks. No longer dispersed over the provinces, they appeared openly in Constantinople, and made such an impression there that the Bogomiles became the subject of universal conversation. The Emperor, who had taken of the treasures of the Church to meet the exigences of the State, endeavoured to soothe the resentment of the Clergy by affecting great zeal for religion under the assumed character of theologian. He therefore sent for some of the heretics to gain information of their proceedings. They told him that their chief Minister was Basil; that there were other twelve called Apostles, and some women also who followed him; and that he travelled extensively, propagating his doctrine. It further appeared that he was, or had been, a Physician; and that, after joining their communion in his youth, he had spent fifty-two years in the labours of his ministry. Alexius then commanded Basil to be brought. He came to the palace without delay, and stood before the Emperor: a venerable old man he was, tall in stature, thoughtfulness and self-denial marked his countenance; his dignified bearing, with flowing beard and monastic garb, commanded involuntary reverence. Alexius rose from his chair to receive him, bade him be seated, invited him to take refreshment, sat at the same table, conversed with familiar condescension, intimated a wish to become his disciple, together with his brother Isaac; and even assured him that he would receive his instructions with as much deference as if they were oracles, and take him as his spiritual guide. Basil resisted, at first, so excessive condescension; and the Emperor and his brother, perceiving that the man was not so insignificant as they fancied a heretic must be, changed their style, and managed, during repeated interviews, to win his confidence. Without reserve, the aged Minister answered their questions, and explained his doctrine. If Alexius can

* Suicer, Thes. Ecclesiast., s. v. Ευχῖται, gives an elaborate account both of the name and of the sect, with the Chaldee, Arabic, or Syriac synonyme, מצלין or מטליס.

be trusted, and Euthymius also, if the notes of the one and the treatise of the other are faithful records of the statements of Basil, which is altogether incredible, he was a Manichean; but it may be collected from the latter, and only extant evidence, that those Paulicians had added to the New Testament the Psalms (probably the Hagiographa, or Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Canticles, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles, contained in a distinct volume, and anciently called, among the Jews, by the title of the first, "The Psalms") and the Prophets, or at least a part of them, and thereby approached considerably towards union with other anti-Romish Christians. They still refused to acknowledge the divine inspiration of the Pentateuch, retained the scepticism of many of the sectarians of the earlier ages in respect to the humanity of our Lord, and, with them, entertained erroneous notions of the sacraments. But their sin, in the eyes of the priesthood, lay in abhorrence of image-worship and of prayer to the saints. Basil is said to have acknowledged the Greek iconoclasts as orthodox, regarding the *Prophets*, Apostles, and martyrs as true saints, which he certainly could not have done had he been indeed a Manichean. But the fashion then was to lay the reproach of Manicheanism and all other old heresies on dissenters from the prevailing system; and sufficient provocation to do this was given, in this instance, by his declaring roundly, that "the Catholics" were Pharisees and Sadducees; (than which nothing could be more true;) that their learned men were Scribes; that the two orders of Clergy were symbolized by the two demoniacs who dwelt in the tombs, the churches occupied by the Priests and Monks being converted into sepulchres by the deposition of relics therein; that the foxes having holes were figures of the crafty Friars, and the birds in their nests types of the Stylites on their pillars. The fact that they had been often hunted to death is proved by a confession put into the mouth of Basil, that they dissimulated and hid themselves in order to save their lives; and the weakness of the effort to make them out Manicheans is betrayed by an acknowledgment that they often ate flesh, eggs, and milk, not excepting their Ministers, whom, after all, Euthymius scarcely ventures to confound with the elect of the pretended prototypes. The Emperor caused the account of the errors of the Bogomiles to be written, and his credit may be estimated by what follows. The wily Greek was in an inner chamber of his palace, playing the part of a disciple; Basil, with unsuspecting earnestness, was expounding his doctrine, and answering questions which he thought to be put in good faith, and therefore detected not their drift. Behind a curtain was concealed a Secretary, who wrote down whatever might be made use of to condemn the victim. "Then the Emperor," these are the words of Fleury, "raised the mask, assembled the senate and military officers, summoned the Clergy and the Patriarch Nicholas, and caused the writing containing the doctrine of Basil to be read. Basil, seeing himself convicted, denied not, but offered to maintain his doctrine, and declared that he was ready to suffer fire, torments, and death." He was committed to prison, visited there by "Catholics," and by

some of his followers, and often taken from the prison to the palace, to be exhorted by Alexius, but resisted every persuasion to recant. The Apostles of Basil, as they are called, were also apprehended, with many others, and subjected to the same trial; but they endured it with equal constancy. So far from being discouraged were the Bogomiles, that they preached everywhere, and their doctrine spread; entire families, including some of high rank, joined them, and so did a multitude of people. The Emperor then sentenced all the prisoners to be burnt. Many, however, had been imprisoned who denied that they were of the sect, and Alexius had recourse to a singular expedient to ascertain the truth. He was mounted on his throne, in a public square, surrounded by the Senate, the chief of the Clergy, and some choice Monks; two fires were prepared, with a cross planted near one of them. He then caused the prisoners to be brought, told them they must all burn, as life would not be worth saving by any suspected of heresy, however innocent; but that, as the Christians would of course prefer dying in that character, they should be consumed in the fire where the cross was erected. At his command those who had not joined the Bogomiles went to the cross: the people murmured when they saw them, as it seemed, on the point of being thrown into the flames: the Emperor graciously gave them their lives, and those who had stood true to their confession were sent back to prison. A few afterwards gave way, and were liberated; the greater number died there; but Basil, as an impenitent heresiarch, was judged worthy of death by the secular Clergy, the Monks, and the Patriarch himself, the Greek Church thus proving itself as cruel as the Roman. The Emperor consented to the sentence, and, after many useless conversations, commanded a pile to be kindled in the middle of the hippodrome, with a cross on the opposite side. Basil was placed between, with an offer of life if he would accept it at the cross, or, if not, he must go into the flames. Some foolish sayings are put into his mouth; but the probability is that he felt, but soon overcame, a sudden terror, sang praise to God in the language of inspired Scripture, and rejoiced in the certain prospect of near deliverance from the toils and persecutions of a lengthened pilgrimage. He was thrown into the fire, and soon consumed, in the presence of the Emperor and Clergy; and the stately ceremoniousness of that martyrdom might have given the model for similar "Acts of Faith" afterwards performed by the Inquisition. Proud of his deed, and like a hound that has once tasted blood, Alexius continued the pursuit of the Paulicians to the end of his life; but history does not preserve a detailed record of exploits* which were insufficient to extirpate a heresy that, with all its defects, was no doubt superior to the orthodoxy of the Greek Church, and would have changed the character of that Church had free course been allowed its teachers. A few years afterwards, Cosmas II., the Patriarch of Constantinople, was deposed on charge of having fallen into the same heresy.†

Disaffection to Rome and to the Clergy overspread Europe, and was sometimes made use of by licentious and ambitious men to

* Fleury, Hist. Eccles., lxvi., 10, 11, 53. † Ibid., lxix, 27.

gratify their passions. Tanchelmus, or Tanquelin, in Flanders, is said to have been guilty of the most disgusting excesses; and in hatred of everything ecclesiastical, many of the Flemings long retained an approving remembrance of his errors. But the original Paulicians, who had spread even to the shores of the German Ocean, were honourably distinguished from mere rebels against episcopal authority by an appearance of sanctity which their enemies called hypocrisy. Many suffered death rather than make shipwreck of a good conscience. The hearths were first prepared at Utrecht, where some were burnt alive (A.D. 1135) by command of the Emperor Lotharius for denying transubstantiation, although that doctrine was not yet put forth under canonical authority. Others fled, hoping to escape death by self-expatriation; but a number of them were discovered at Cologne, and imprisoned in a barn, whither Egbert, the Abbot of Schonaug, was sent to convince them of error. He disputed with three of them, but failing to overcome by argument or authority, saw them burnt alive. The Cardinal Archbishop of Rheims, in quality of Papal Legate, laboured hard to win or to compel the numerous seceders to come into the communion of his Church, but with small success. They endeavoured, on their side, to purchase liberty of worship, or at least toleration, offering him six hundred marks of silver as a voluntary tax, after the manner of the Jews; but the Legate would not hear of composition, and, after trying other means for about fourteen years, had several of them burnt. (A.D. 1183.)* In the country now known as Rhenish Prussia, persecution quickly followed; and the new, but horrible, method of destroying heretics, which began in the hippodrome of Constantinople, and was imitated at Utrecht, was repeated, after a very short interval, at Cologne. The heretics there were described by a Priest, who had taken part in the inquisition and punishment, and wrote an account of them to Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, wherein they are distinguished as if a part were Manicheans, and the others not. There may not have been two separate communions; but the fact of a doctrinal difference, added to that of an enlarged canon of holy Scripture, which we have just observed in the narrative of the Bogomiles at Constantinople, indicates a simultaneous advancement in doctrine, highly creditable to the Paulicians in general, and illustrative of an intellectual and moral progression throughout Europe, which must be attributed to the care of God in preparing Christendom for the slowly approaching Reformation. They denied, according to our inquisitorial witness,† that the body of Christ was made on the altar, *because*, as he very doubtfully phrases his relation, all the Priests of the Church were not consecrated. They said that the apostolical dignity was corrupted by engaging itself in secular affairs while sitting in the chair of Peter; that because the Pope did not wage warfare as Peter did, he had deprived himself of the power of consecrating, which was so great in Peter; (a concession, be it noted,

* Brandt's Reformation in the Low Countries, vol. i., pp. 11—13, London, 1720 Fleury, Hist. Eccles., lxxi., 50.

† Evervinus, as cited by Allix, Ancient Churches of Piedmont, chap. xvi.; and Trithemius, in chap. xvii.

that they were not likely to make twenty years before even the Romish Church had solemnly adopted the doctrine of transubstantiation;) and that the power of consecrating others, which the pontifical dignity did not possess, Archbishops and Bishops, who lived like men of the world, could not receive from it. They cited the words of Christ, "The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' chair; what, therefore, *they bid you do*, that do," to prove that such men as the Priests of that day had only the power of preaching and commanding, but nothing more. The writer complains that thus they made void the priesthood of the Church, and condemned the sacraments; baptism alone excepted, which they would only allow to adults, who, they said, are baptized by Christ himself, whoever be the Minister of the sacrament:—that they alleged against infant baptism the words of the Gospel, "Whosoever shall believe, and be baptized, shall be saved:"—that they called second marriage fornication; quoting for this the words of the Saviour, "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder," (as if God only joined unmarried persons, as were our first parents before their union,) as also our Lord's words when disapproving of divorce. He states that they put no confidence in the intercession of saints; maintained that fasting, and other afflictions undertaken for sin, were not necessary, because, when the sinner repents of his sins, they are all forgiven him, and because all other things observed in the church, besides those commanded by Christ and the Apostles, were superstitious:—that they did not believe in purgatorial fire after death; but maintained that souls, as soon as they depart out of the bodies, enter into rest or punishment; proving it from the words of Solomon, "Which way soever the tree falls, whether to the north, or to the south, there it lies:"—and that they made void all prayers and oblations of the faithful for the deceased. He spoke of many having been burnt to death with extreme complacency; but let Bernard know that those who had returned to the Church said that there were great numbers of their persuasion scattered abroad every where, and that amongst them were many Clergy and Monks. And he reported that some who had been burnt said in their defence that their heresy had continued from the times of the Apostles, and was preserved in Greece, and in some other countries. There were some, they said, who called themselves Apostles, and had a Pope of their own; whereas others despised the Pope of Rome, and yet had not another; which may amount to this, that some were Episcopalians, and others not. "These Apostles of Satan," he adds, "have amongst them continent women, (as they call them,) widows, virgins, their wives, some of whom are among the number of their elect, others of their believers; as in imitation of the Apostles, who had power to lead about women with them." Bernard exaggerated this circumstance into a charge of hypocrisy and immorality; but it is easy to perceive that Evervinus merely described their condition as married Ministers, who were careful to live in the society of their wives, a caution which would indicate purity of domestic conduct, contrasted with prevalent licentiousness, under the demoralizing influence of priestly celibacy. They were known by various names,

expressive of the contempt of their persecutors, or of some peculiarity of their history or habits. In Germany they were called *Cathari* or *Catharini*, a word as yet unexplained; in Flanders they were known as *Piphles* or *Turlupins*, for some unknown reason; and in France people called them *Tisserands*, or "weavers," because many of them were of that occupation, and their devotional meetings were held in weaving-rooms and cellars, where they professed to enjoy an assurance of the divine presence.

Nowhere did clearer vestiges of primitive Christian doctrine remain than in sub-Alpine Italy. The independence of the diocesses of Piedmont and Lombardy from the see of Rome until the eleventh century is a most notorious fact of ecclesiastical history. In the twelfth, although the Bishops had lost their independence, there were various elements of disaffection to the dominant Church still existing among the people,—a desire of independence, some remaining perception of evangelical truth, Manicheanism lingering in the speculations of many mere dissenters, and the purer, yet imperfect, doctrinal system of the Paulicians. They were not careful to enforce uniformity among themselves; and even if historical documents were much more abundant, it would be impossible to analyze the confused mass, or to place even the more eminent persons each in his proper class. Relinquishing so hopeless an attempt, let us fix our attention on some undoubted evidences of religious revival, and the correspondent instances of Romish persecution. As to doctrine, the most ancient document extant from which a knowledge of the doctrine of the Vaudois, or Christian inhabitants of the valleys of Piedmont, can be derived, is "The Noble Lesson," a metrical compendium of doctrine and precept, so called from the words, "noble lesson," occurring in the first line. From internal evidence, which will presently be given, it is assigned to the year 1100, or a few years later, and therefore may appropriately precede a notice of Italian martyrs of the *twelfth* century. A manuscript containing it was deposited by Samuel Morland, Esq., who had been for some time resident in Piedmont, in the library of the University of Cambridge, and is printed in his "History of the Evangelical Churches of the Valleys of Piedmont. London, 1658." These verses, written in the vernacular dialect of the eleventh century, impressed with popular simplicity, and breathing scriptural truth, were probably recited or sung by the Vaudois in their cottages, to preserve the belief and keep alive the spirit of the fathers in the bosoms of their children. The first eight lines, comprehending the title and the date, may serve as a specimen of the whole, which shall be briefly compendiated:—

"O frayre entendé una nobla Leyçon.
Sovent deven velhar e istar en oreson.
C.* nos veen aquest mont esser pres del chavon.
Mot curios deorian esser de bonas obras far.
C. nos veen aquest mont de la fin apropiar.
Ben ha mil e cent an compli entierament.
Que fo scripta lora C. son al derier temp.
Poc deorian cubitar C. son al remanent."

* C. *Car*, for.

"O brethren, hear a noble lesson. We should often watch, and be at prayer; for we see this world to be near its end. We should be very careful to do good works; for we see this world draw near its end. A thousand and a hundred years are full well complete, since it was written to them: 'For we are in the last time.' Little should we covet; for we are at the end." The prevailing impression of some great approaching change is then expressed with powerful solemnity of language. They daily saw the signs of such a change accomplished in increasing evil and decreasing good, perils foretold in Scripture, by the Gospel, and by St. Paul. As no man living could know the end, nor could they be certain whether they should die on that day or the morrow, they ought to fear. But when the day of judgment should come, every one would receive full recompence, either good or evil. "The Scripture saith,—and we must believe it,—'All men of the world shall take two ways: the good to glory, the wicked to torment.' He who will not believe in this distinction, must search the Scripture, where he will find that, from Adam until his own time, few in comparison have been saved. But whoever will do good works, must begin with honouring God the Father, and must implore the aid of his glorious Son,—dear Son of holy Mary,—and of the Holy Spirit, who gives us a good way: these three, the Holy Trinity, full of all power, wisdom, and goodness, ought to be invocated. Men should pray for grace to overcome the world, the devil, and the flesh, to know the way of life, and keep the soul pure, both soul and body in the way of charity, loving God and their neighbour; not only them who do them good, but them who do them evil. They should have firm hope in the heavenly King, who will lodge them in his glorious home at last; but whoso will not do what is contained in this lesson, shall not enter the holy house. This is hardly to be received by wicked people who love gold and silver, contemn the promises of God, keep not his law, nor suffer those who would. How came this evil among men? Because Adam sinned at first, eating the apple. Then sprang the evil seed, then he died, and all that followed. Well may we call that an evil morsel! But Christ has redeemed the good by his passion." We are told in this Lesson that "Adam was miscreant to God his Creator, and that men grow worse and worse, forsaking God, and believing in idols, to their own destruction. They now break the law which God put into their hearts, and abuse their power of doing good or evil, as did Cain. The law given to man at first, and written in the heart of every man, was to love, fear, and serve God, keep matrimony firm,—that noble covenant,—have peace each with his brother, and love all beside; hate pride, love humility, and act with equity. Few kept this law; more broke it, believed the devil, loved the world, served the body, and therefore perished. Therefore he is to be reproved that says, God did not make the people to let them perish. But let each one take heed that the like befall not him." Then follows a sententious, full, and purely scriptural compendium of sacred history, almost every line capable of practical application. From the history of the New Testament this "Noble Lesson" passes to that of the early ages of Christianity, and then to

the time of the writer. The description here is important, and must be translated without abridgment. "After the Apostles, were some teachers who taught the way of Jesus Christ our Saviour. One here and there is found even in this present time; but he is manifest to very few people. Such teachers strongly desire to point out the way of Jesus Christ, but are so persecuted that they can do but little; so blinded are the false Christians with error, and, more than all others, they who are Pastors: for they persecute and hate them that are better than themselves, and let the false deceivers live in peace. By this may they be known who are not good Pastors; that they love not the sheep, except for the fleece; for the Scripture saith,—and we may see,—that if they find one that is good, that wishes to love God and Jesus Christ, one that will neither curse, nor swear, nor lie, nor commit adultery, nor kill, nor cheat his neighbour, nor avenge himself of his enemy, they say that he is a *Vaudés*, and ought to be punished. They find occasion, by lies and deceit, to take from him what he has gotten by his just labour. But strongly is he comforted that is thus persecuted for the fear of the Lord; for the kingdom of heaven shall be given to him when he leaves this world; then shall he have great glory if he has had dishonour here. But in this is their great malice very manifest, that he who will curse, and lie, and swear, and lend out on usury largely, and kill, and live licentiously, and take vengeance on those who have offended him; they say that he is a fine fellow, (*prodome*,) and he passes for a loyal man. But let him take heed that he is not deceived at last. The mortal sickness comes, death seizes him, he can scarcely speak, and the Priest asks if he will confess. But, according to the Scripture, he has too long delayed what it commands, and says, 'Confess while thou hast time, and put it not off until the last.' The Priest asks him if he has any sin. Two words or three he answers, and has quickly finished. Well says the Priest to him that he cannot be eased if he does not restore all to his neighbour, and amend his wrong. But when he hears this, he has great trouble: he thinks within himself, that if he restores it entirely, what will remain for his children, and what will the people say? Then he commands his children that they amend the wrong, and makes a bargain with the Priest that he may be eased. If he has a hundred *livres* of another man's, or even two, the Priest acquits him for a hundred *sous*,* and sometimes for less, when he can get no more, and bids him give so much in alms, and promises him pardon if he will have masses said for himself and his parents, and promises pardons for them, too, whether they have been just or wicked. Then he lays his hand upon his head; and, when he walks away, the more money he carries off the more merry is he, and makes him understand that he is well absolved: but ill are they compensated who have suffered wrong, and he shall be deceived in such an absolution; and he that makes him believe it commits mortal sin." Then follows a denial that Popes, Cardinals, Bishops, Abbots, and the like, have any power to forgive sin, but God only. After some good instructions, the

* Whatever change the coinage of Piedmont may have undergone, it is enough to note that, at present, twenty *sous* make one *livre*.

Lesson closes with a prayer: "May it please the Lord, who formed the world, that we be of his elect, to dwell in his court." One article, however, is wanting in this document,—that article of the standing or the falling church, justification by faith in Christ alone. If this were included, the confession of faith would have been complete, free, as it is, from any antiscriptural doctrine. So familiar were the Priests with the language of public reprobation, that hitherto the Vaudois had not suffered persecution unto death, but yet were kept in perpetual dread of every sort of vexatious oppression short of martyrdom. Now the hatred of the Priesthood rises higher; and notices appear of persons who suffered death for truth's sake. A man, of great zeal and piety,—whether Presbyter, Monk, or hermit, the narrators of the event scarcely knew, but certainly an impressive Preacher, and who had travelled through France,—came into the north of Italy; and, in the spirit of the Noble Lesson, declaimed there, also, against the corruption of the Clergy, and was attended by the celebrity naturally arising from the bold eloquence and justice of his discourses, as well as the sanctity of his deportment. Even the Priests were constrained to respect him, and acknowledge him to be a holy man, although acting independently, as it would seem, of all episcopal jurisdiction; which he might the more easily do in a country where there were so many nonconformists, and where the Priests themselves had fallen but recently under the Papal yoke. But he proceeded to Rome, and there cried aloud, sparing not, until "spiritual men," as they were called, moved with anger at his reproofs of their crimes, licentiousness, and *errors*, put him to death; some say by hanging; others, with greater probability, affirm, that he was secretly assassinated, or drowned in the Tiber. He had forebodings of a violent death; but, not ceasing to pour forth admonitions, exclaimed, "You contemn both me and your Creator, him who, by his only-begotten Son, hath redeemed you. And no marvel if you seek my death, being a sinful person, preaching unto you the truth; when, if St. Peter himself were here this day, and rebuked your sins, you would not spare him either. For my part, I am not afraid to suffer death for the truth's sake; but this I say to you, that God will look upon your impurities, and will be revenged; for you, being full of all wickedness, play the blind guides to the people committed to you, leading them the way to hell: but God is a God of vengeance." His apprehensions were verified: the name of Arnulph, or Arnolfo, stands at the head of the Italian martyrs. To the honour of Pope Honorius II. it is recorded, that he was angry at the murder, but he abstained from seeking out and punishing the murderers; perhaps fearing lest he should follow, having the Ecclesiastics all against him.* The sermons of Arnulph were not yet forgotten, when another Preacher arose, as if to avenge his death on the Church that had rejected him. At Brescia, in Lombardy, a young man of daring spirit and ready utterance, who had received only the lesser order of Reader, took up the same strain, and declaimed, with vehemence, on the corruption of the Clergy, from the Pope to the Acolyth, mingling, with cutting invective, new and singular opinions. He taught that

* Foxe, Acts and Monuments, London, 1843, vol. ii., p. 182, and Appendix.

there could be no salvation for those wealthy Clerks, lordly Bishops, and endowed Monks; that church property rightfully belonged to the temporal Sovereign, who alone should dispose of it at his pleasure; that the Clergy ought to be maintained by the tithes and voluntary offerings of the people, and be content with a bare supply of necessaries for a life of poverty and self-denial. Explaining, in this style, the sacred text, he aroused the population of Brescia, already weary of the Priests, to such a pitch of excitement, that they forsook the churches, and the Clergy fell into extreme contempt. At the instance of the Bishop of his diocess in the second Council of Lateran, the Pope silenced him. He then left Brescia, crossed the Alps, took up his abode at Zurich, where he resumed his attacks on ecclesiastical abuses, kindled a flame there also, and prepared the way for Zuinglius, who arose nearly four centuries afterwards, by impressing a new character of freedom on the inhabitants of Switzerland. Not only the laity, but the heads of the Church, supported him by connivance, if not by sanction. The Bishop of Constance, to which diocess Zurich belonged, treated him with marked esteem; and the Papal Legate received him openly at his table. Bernard, in whom dwelt the ruling spirit of the age, addressed letters of earnest entreaty to them both, beseeching them to have him imprisoned, because his preaching did irreparable damage to the Church; and cautioning them against the milder measure of expulsion from the diocess, because, if banished from one country, he would betake himself to another, and there spread the pestilence of heresy and disaffection. "O that his doctrine were as sound" (wrote the trembling Abbot) "as his life is blameless!" He suggested to the Legate that if he would not have him imprisoned, he should undertake to convert him; although that he considered to be hopeless. So thought both the Legate and the Bishop, who deferred to the superior talent and better cause of the learned and enthusiastic Reader. The Pope himself (Innocent II.) wrote to the Archbishops of Sens and Rheims, under whose jurisdiction, severally, were Arnold, and his former master, Abelard,* commanding the latter to be put to silence, and both of them to be not only silenced, but placed in solitary confinement. His mandate, however, was not obeyed. Being at war with the King of Sicily, he was himself made prisoner; an Antipope disputed the chair with him; the Romans revolted; and, longing to be delivered from the rule of a priestly King, invited Arnold to visit them. Instead of being immured in a prison, he hastened to Rome, harangued the citizens in classic language, as far as such language could be spoken in that age; and, with an incongruous mixture of passages from the Bible, and from Latin historians and poets, he exhorted them to emulate the spirit of the ancient Romans, and to aspire after "Christian" liberty. But he told one mighty truth, which Rome remembers at this day, and never will forget,—*that the temporal government pertains not to a Bishop, who should be contented with spiritual authority.* For above ten years he was the true King of Rome, although the ancient republican form of government was revived; and an important precedent was afforded for the effort made

* A person far inferior to Arnold in moral character.

by the Romans in the years 1848 and 1849, to deliver themselves from Papal tyranny. Frederic Barbarossa then restored the temporal power to the Papacy; but republican medals are treasured in the cabinets to recall the memory of that brief period. The fall of Arnold was compassed thus: A Cardinal passing through "the sacred street" on his way to the Pope, Adrian, the Englishman, was wounded by some unknown persons. Adrian caught the occasion, and placed the city under an interdict, until Arnold, and his principal adherents, as they were called, should be expelled. From Christmas to Easter the Romans endured the suspension of all religious ceremonies; but, in "the holy week," the Senators, pressed on one side by the Priests, and on the other by the populace, came to the Pope, swore on the Gospels that they would expel Arnold from the Roman territory; which they did forthwith, and he remained in Tuscany, until the German Emperor, marching towards Rome, and met there by a deputation from Adrian, acceded to their request to compel his friends to deliver the arch-republican into their hands. They carried him to Rome, burnt him at the stake in the presence of the inconstant public, and cast his ashes into the Tiber, lest they should be gathered as the relics of a martyr (A.D. 1155). Sad end of a political Preacher! The whole affair, however, was characteristic of the foreign aid by which alone the Roman Pontiffs could afterwards retain their regal power, and of the only argument by which they can ever silence heretics.* Yet impatience of Papal tyranny was increased, rather than overawed, by the remembrance of that momentary defeat; and, while the Roman insurgents were too numerous to be punished, and the Pope was restricted to the exercise of his ecclesiastical functions, the States of the Church were threatened by an outbreak of discontent in the episcopal city and province of Orvieto. While Arnold flourished in Rome, a Florentine (Diotesalvi) was performing a similar part in the provincial city, but rather as a Christian Preacher than the leader of a political movement. He is described as a man of venerable appearance, and modest exterior, who preached against the doctrine of sacramental grace, and was therefore called a Manichean, of course. He taught that every good man is equal to St. Peter, and that every sinner will be punished as Judas. For twenty years, at least, he preached such truths, (from 1150, until after 1169,) until the reigning Bishop succeeded in banishing him and another Preacher from the city. The believers in his doctrine, which was probably that of the Vaudois, do not appear to have left the dominant Church, but rather to have been active in endeavouring to reform it. Two ladies are mentioned as remarkably zealous and influential over the women of Orvieto, and with them a great number of the men, including the Bishop himself; until the Bishop, finding that he had hazarded his dignity by allowing freedom to his conscience, renounced the perilous convictions, took advice of the Canons and others of that class, at their instigation professed himself to be undeceived, and confirmed the recantation by a bitter persecution of the reputed heretics. Some were hung, others beheaded, others burnt alive,

* Gibbon, chap. lxix.; Fleury, lxviii., 55, 66, 67; lxix., 10; lxx., 4.

others banished; and others, who died without submitting to the ceremonies of Popery, were harmlessly accursed, and their remains not admitted to ecclesiastical burial. But they were not all dead and buried. All Italy was permeated by the influence of truth; and soon afterwards, while Innocent III. prosecuted a territorial quarrel with my Lord of Orvieto, and kept him prisoner at large at Rome, a body of reforming Preachers came from no more distant a region than the patrimony of St. Peter, to recall, with encouragement of brethren from Viterbo, the inquirers of Orvieto. The reformed, as we may venture to call them, flocked into the latter city, and, by rapid conversions to the new doctrine and accession of strangers, the "Catholic" population became a small minority. They then conceived the unhappy idea of fortifying themselves as a reformed town; and, to avoid this, the residuary population sent a deputation to Rome to ask for help. Pietro di Parenzo, a noble Roman, was sent to support the Bishop, who had been at last liberated, but was unable to enforce obedience to the clerical Sovereign, which he rashly attempted to do, by demolishing the towers of the principal houses, and commanding those who had left the Church—for the secession was then complete—to return, under pain of canonical punishment. The summons availed but little: therefore he proceeded to execute the threat, by putting some in irons, flogging others publicly, subjecting others to banishment, fines, or confiscation, and causing several houses to be pulled down. The indignant inhabitants threatened him with vengeance. He went to Rome, to keep Lent, as could scarcely be done in Orvieto. The Pope gave him unlimited authority, with plenary absolution for whatever sin he might commit in chastising the heretics; and he returned, boasting, by God, the holy Virgin, and St. Peter, that he would defend the Catholic faith, though he should die for it; and that, if he did die a violent death, it should be by the hands of heretics. A few evenings after his return, as he was going to bed, a party of men came to his palace, were admitted by a servant who was in the plot, and called his master from his chamber. They gagged him, bound him hand and foot, carried him out of the city, and murdered him (A.D. 1199). The Bishop had him buried in the cathedral; miracles were duly performed at his tomb; and the church of Orvieto honours his martyrdom annually on the 21st of May.* This event, with others not dissimilar, goes far to explain the suppression of doctrinal reform in Italy, which could not be promoted by human passions, even though the guilt might possibly be extenuated, in the apprehension of the guilty, by the excess of provocation given.

Having marked the awakening of the public mind in the Netherlands, a part of Germany, and subalpine and central Italy, during this century, with the uniform resistance of the higher Clergy, except in one instance, we come to France, now the most interesting section of the European field. The impulse given to preaching in the Romish pulpits by Foulques de Neuilly towards the end of the century has already been noticed as remotely beneficial; but we can trace a succession of unspeakably more beneficial events beyond the enclosure

* Fleury, lxxv., 22, 23.

of that fallen Church. In the provinces of Dauphiny and Provence, many, very many persons, branded with ignominious epithets, maintained doctrines hostile to those which were enforced by ecclesiastical authority. The piercing, unrelenting vigilance of the Bishops gradually wearied them out, and, after wandering through Languedoc, most of them found brief respite in Gascony and the neighbouring country, where they worshipped God in private assemblies, or, as the cruel taunt of an enemy intimates, (*sibi foveas præparavit,*) "the foolish and impious heresy prepared itself *dens*," found "hiding-places" (*latibula*). The above-mentioned Prelates, not content with the expulsion of those persons from their diocesses, or aware that the innovation advanced through all the south of France, despite their efforts to prevent it, brought a complaint to the Council held at Toulouse (A.D. 1119) of the Bishops and Abbots of Languedoc, Gascony, Spain, and Brittany, with Callistus II., newly elected Pontiff, at their head, and easily obtained a canon condemnatory of those "who feigned an appearance of religion, condemned the sacrament of the body and blood of our Lord, the baptism of infants, the priesthood, and other ecclesiastical orders, and legitimate marriages." To know certainly what those dissidents did reject or deny, we should have some testimony of their own, which unfortunately does not exist; but if their original neighbourhood with Piedmont and the course of their emigration be considered, and their alleged heresy compared with the Noble Lesson of the Vaudois,* it will not appear probable that their opinions are fairly stated. However that might be, the Fathers pretended to expel them from the Church (with which, indeed, they chose to hold no communion) as heretics, and ordered that they should be put down by the secular powers. They subjected their defenders to the same condemnation, unless they would repent. With equal zeal they pronounced excommunication against all laymen who laid hands on the property of deceased Bishops, which some Princes conceived they had a right to do, and on Monks, Canons, and Clerks who renounced their profession, or allowed their hair and beards to grow like those of laymen. This looks as if there had been defection from the ranks of the Clergy, and agrees with a charge brought against the Vaudois, (so to call them for want of a better name,) that they had compelled Monks to take wives; a ridiculous accusation, especially when brought against the very men who were said by the Council to condemn marriage. Their most eminent Minister was Pierre de Bruis, who had preached in those provinces for twenty years, when some devout Priests, failing, no doubt, to borrow the sword of magisterial authority, engaged ruffians to make a riot, and burn him at St. Gilles, (A.D. 1126,) for having burnt a cross, as they said, or crosses, cooked his dinner therewith, and eaten it on a Good Friday: an offence not unlikely to be committed at a time when Priests renounced their orders, Monks their vows, and idolaters their idols. From his Latin name, Petrus de Bruis, the appellation of Petrobrusians was given to his followers,†

* Supra, p. 495.

† Allix, Albigenses, chap. xiv.; Faber, Vallenses and Albigenses, book ii., chap. 6; Fleury, lxvii., 2; lxix., 24.

who multiplied after his martyrdom. Disgust of idolatry led many to remove altars, destroy crucifixes, empty churches of their images, and, it is said, re-baptize converts, as if the corrupt baptism of Romanism were a nullity. Alarmed at the rapid secession from his Church, Pope Eugenius III. despatched an Italian Bishop, who had acquired experience as Legate in Syria and in England, to represent him at Toulouse (A.D 1147). He was commissioned to attack Henry, not a disciple of Peter, as they alleged, but, like him, an eminently successful Minister. When Henry began his ministry, he was a young man, but of commanding exterior. Tall, with animated countenance, piercing eye, and a full sonorous voice, attired carelessly, and bare-footed, he presented an appearance of poverty, opening the way to popular acceptance. But his reputation for holiness and learning chiefly bespoke attention. When he entered the town of Mans, he was preceded by two others, carrying staves, surmounted by small iron crosses, his own staff being similarly adorned; and they might have passed for Monks on penitential pilgrimage.* It was then Ash Wednesday. The Bishop Hidelbert received them kindly, directed that they should be allowed to enter the town, and that the Archdeacons should permit Henry to preach. The people crowded to hear him, were delighted with his eloquence, convinced by his reasonings, and soon alienated from their former superstition. The Priests found themselves neglected, masses were abandoned, and the living no longer prayed for the dead, but for themselves. When the Bishop returned from Rome, whither he had gone just after the arrival of Henry, the people received him coldly on his ceremonious entrance, and he was surprised to see that they set no value on his blessings. He therefore required the unwelcome Preacher to quit his diocess, and thought it enough to boast of, that *two* persons had relinquished profession of the novel doctrine. The Legate, on his arrival in Languedoc, found things in a remarkable condition. The churches were without people, the people separated from the Priests, and the Priests despised. The old worship was no longer esteemed holy, feasts were not kept, people died without the last ceremonies; and so extreme was the re-action against rites, that infants were not baptized. The Legate, with usual pomp, made a progress through the alienated provinces, but was everywhere received with mortifying coldness. It was well for his cause that he had a companion whose high reputation drew together that portion of the population which yet retained any attachment to the hierarchy, or were so undecided as to yield to the charm of a great name. Bernard, founder and first Abbot of the monastery of Clairvaux, who had frequently been invited by the Clergy of Toulouse to visit them, consented, in that emergency, to accompany the Legate; and, if his biographer may be believed, which is more than doubtful, the country was everywhere stirred up to meet him, and crowds, both day and night, pressed on him to receive his benediction.

* Those who call him a disciple of Pierre de Bruis overlook several marks of difference. Peter was charged with having burnt crosses: he carried one. His field of action was far distant from that of Peter. A distinct catalogue of heterodox opinions was laid to his charge.

In every place he performed miracles. Bread, infused with miraculous power by his touch, healed the sick, whether they had faith or no, for he declared faith to be unnecessary; a paralytic was raised up by virtue of his blessing; and the greatest of all his miracles, as we can most easily imagine, was performed when every one in the congregation, which, doubtless, consisted of admirers, raised his hand to vote against heresy, in compliance with his request at the close of a sermon. The most truthful part of the narrative is that which states that many noblemen and Ecclesiastics, both secular * and regular,† were attached to the new doctrine, and that the most ignorant persons, after they had joined them for a week, became so knowing that it was impossible to convince them of heresy; that when the Legate entered Alby, people marched before him, leading asses, and beating drums, instead of the honorific procession which usually greeted the entry of a Legate; that only thirty persons could be collected at mass, but that Bernard was afterwards received with tokens of respect; that *the gentlemen* of Toulouse promised Bernard that they would not suffer *the weavers* to meet again in the town; and that afterwards the Legate pronounced a sentence of excommunication against the heretics and their abettors, a sentence equivalent with outlawry; and that the said excommunication followed a preamble describing Henry as an apostate, a lewd person, and a vagabond. Bernard tracked the excommunicated Preacher, laboured with poor success to regain for the Clergy the confidence of the people, but so far succeeded with the chief men of several towns, that Henry was persecuted, hunted from place to place, and at last brought in chains to the Bishop. Bernard, having left the diocess, missed the gratification of seeing him burnt at a stake,‡ by command of the Legate. Others say he died in prison. Be it as it may, he was a martyr. On his return Bernard wrote to the people of Toulouse, exhorting them to persecute heretics without relenting, until they should have driven all out of the country; and repeated an exhortation often given them before, never to receive a strange Preacher unless he could produce a licence of the Pope, or obtained the sanction of the Bishop.

Neither did zeal for the dominant Church in the Clergy, nor alienation from it in the people, diminish after the expedition into Languedoc. Both parties continued, and the public mind retained the perception of a few wholesome truths. Twelve or thirteen years after the death of Henry, the Head of the church raised up another and more eminent Evangelist. Some of the principal citizens of Lyons were one day together, when one of the company died suddenly, (A.D. 1160,) and another, Pierre de Vaud, or, as he is sometimes incorrectly called, Peter Waldo, a rich merchant, was so impressed with that visitation of divine Providence, that he resolved forthwith to lead a new life. Had he been a true Romanist, he would probably have retired to a monastery, and given his wealth to the Priests; but, instead of idle seclusion, he devoted himself to the good of his neighbours, distributed his property among the poor, and

* Priests. † Monks.

‡ Fleury, lxix., 24, 25; Allix, Albigenses, xiv.; Faber, Vallenses and Albigenses, vi.

began to exhort all around him to repent also. His beneficence to the poor, and the earnestness of his discourses, attended with that more than human influence which certainly draws congregations, caused him to be followed by a multitude of all classes, but chiefly of the indigent. Voluntary poverty was then esteemed as an evidence of piety. Some others followed his example, became poor for Christ's sake, and dispersed themselves over the country, preaching the Gospel. And as the Latin Bible could not then be so easily understood, as when the language was less corrupted in the vernacular dialect, he lost no time in translating into French, for the benefit of the common people, the text of the New Testament and part of the Old. This was the first version of the holy Scriptures into any of what may be called the modern languages of Europe, and must have largely tended to promote sacred knowledge among the opponents of Romanism, and impart a more vigorous character to the incipient Reformation: for we cannot overlook the fact that the Reformation began in the twelfth century. The Archbishop endeavoured to silence Waldo, but in vain. He dreaded not threatened excommunication; and maintained that, although a layman, he had a divine right to publish the Gospel to all within his reach. The Archbishop then endeavoured to apprehend him; but he escaped from Lyons, was followed by many of his converts, thus cast out upon the world in a state of utter destitution, and therefore known, wherever they came, as *the poor men of Lyons*. The same designation, or that of WALDENSES, from Peter Waldo, continued to be applied to them. Few historical notices of this holy man remain; but his work could not be destroyed; and while a wanderer, he was also an Apostle. Picardy, whither he fled at first, was soon the scene of sanguinary persecution, and in Bohemia, where he finished his course, (A.D. 1179,) Papal domination found memorable resistance.* The struggle between the Papacy and evangelical dissent was fairly begun, and persecution became systematic. The Synod of Tours (A.D. 1163) commanded all the Bishops and Priests of the diocess of Toulouse to take care to forbid all persons, under pain of excommunication, giving reception, or the least assistance, to the followers of the Waldensian heresy, whenever they should be discovered. Neither were they to have any dealings with them, in the way of buying and selling, to the end that, being deprived of the common succours of life, they might repent of the evil of their way. All who contravened this order were to be included in the excommunication; and as many as could be found were to be imprisoned by the "Catholic Princes," and their property confiscated.† The French Clergy having so ordained, the secular arm was ready to enforce their pleasure, and many unrecorded acts of persecution doubtless followed. Nine persons were found at Vezelay, a town of Burgundy, charged, as usual, with the follies of Manicheanism, (A.D. 1167,) and placed in solitary confinement, until Bishops, and other persons of authority, could make it convenient to assemble in

* Faber, Vallenses, &c., chap. xii.; Milner, Hist., cent. xiii., chap. 1; Foxe, Acts and Monuments, vol. ii., p. 264, seq.

† Limborch, History of the Inquisition, book i., chap. 9.

the place, and undertake their conversion, as they were used to speak. They lay in prison two months, harassed by the visits of Priests, who employed threats and smiles alternately, labouring to move them, but without effect. Bishops, Abbots, and Doctors then met together, drew up a catalogue of heretical opinions and practices, but withheld their sentence. Easter approached: they were told that they must be tried by a fiery ordeal, and two of them, overcome by terror, begged that they might be tried by water, to prove that they believed what the Church believed. The whole company was then made to walk in procession round the cloister of a convent, in the presence of a crowd of people, the Clergy rejoicing over the inconstancy of the two, until the Abbot raised his voice, and asked the people what should be done with the seven. "Burn them, burn them," was the desired answer; and they were accordingly committed to the flames. The two were tried by water. One was declared innocent, and the other guilty; towards whom the Abbot graciously exercised clemency by sparing him from the stake, but commanding him to be whipped publicly, and then banished.* Next came the famous Council, or Conference, of Alby. The Waldenses had become so numerous, and were so well known in Languedoc, that no existing power could suppress them. The nobility in the neighbourhood of Lombers, a small town near Alby, openly protected them, and they were honourably known as *good men*, although the Priests branded them with the name of an old heresy. To proceed summarily against persons who had thus risen into favour, would have been imprudent; but if they could be convicted of heresy, and that with show of condescension and forbearance, by the dignitaries of the Church, the tide of public opinion might be turned against them. The Archbishop of Narbonne determined to convene the Bishops of his province at Alby, (A.D. 1176,) to examine some of those people; and, having heard their tenets, or extorted answers unfavourable to themselves by questioning or cross-questioning, to pronounce a formal refutation. They met: several Waldenses, as we shall now call them, were present. The conference proceeded without any disorder; the reporter or historian duly made them out to be Manicheans; the arguments, however, were perplexing: "After divers reasons alleged on both sides, in presence of the Bishop of Alby, they chose and settled Judges on both sides, with consent of that Bishop" as diocesan. The Judges cited authorities out of the New Testament, and then, by command of the Bishop of Alby, the Bishop of Lyons pronounced sentence. The sentence is long, but demonstrates that they were very like what we now call Protestants. It ended in a notice, that they would be denounced as heretics in all Catholic courts. On hearing this sentence, they turned their backs on the Bishops, and appealed to the assembled people, one speaking for all, in these terms, if correctly related by the Romish annalist:—"Good people, the faith which we now confess, we confess for your sakes. We believe that there is one only God in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and that the Son of God hath taken our flesh upon

* Fleury, lxxi., 50.

him; that he was baptized in Jordan; that he fasted in the wilderness; that he hath preached our salvation; that he suffered, died, and was buried; that he descended into hell; that he rose again the third day; that he ascended into heaven; that he sent the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost; that he shall come at the day of judgment, to judge both the quick and the dead; and that all shall rise again. We know, also, that what we believe with our heart, we ought to confess with our mouth. We believe that he is not saved who doth not eat the body of Jesus Christ; and that the body of Jesus Christ is not consecrated but in the Church, and by the Priest, be he good or bad; and that it is no better consecrated by a good Priest than by a bad one. We believe also that none can be saved but those who are baptized, and that little children are saved by baptism. We believe also that man and wife are saved, though they be carnally joined, and that every one must repent with his mouth and heart, and be baptized in the church by a Priest. And if they could show us more from the Gospels, we would believe and own it." It would be unfair to interpret too rigidly an oral confession, pronounced under the excitement of an artful and wearisome controversy, even if correctly reported from their lips; but most unfair so to interpret such a confession when related by an enemy. Their statements were defensive: as to the sacrament of the Lord's supper, the heresy of transubstantiation afterwards forced on the Church by Innocent III. was a favourite speculation, and the acknowledgment of consecration by a Priest, if really made, might have been intended to parry the dispute. A notion of salvation by baptism *might* have been held by the speakers; but of this it is impossible to be certain: it only proves that they did not reject infant baptism. The acknowledgment of marriage was a necessary answer to a vulgar slander, and that of oral confession was elicited by what had passed in the conference. If the Bishop of Alby or of Lyons, like the Abbot of Vezelay, had then appealed to the people, they would certainly not have cried out, "Burn them," nor could the extemporaneous confession be interpreted as heretical. Yet the Priests were not baffled altogether; for the good men had avowed an objection to judicial oaths, and my Lord of Lyons, quite prepared for such an emergency, instantly required them to swear to the confession. That was impossible; and the Bishop of Lodeve, by command of the Bishop of Alby, at that instant stood up and declared them suspected of heresy, and infamous. In vain did they remind the latter that he had promised not to require them to swear; deaf to remonstrance, he gave notice to the militia of Lombers that they must not protect their townsmen. Nine Bishops, Clerks, Abbots, and laymen appended their signatures to this conclusion, and the Council of Alby ended without any important result. It only gave the good men of Lombers notoriety, and to them and their brethren the new name of Albigeois, or ALBIGENSES.* No doubt the persecutors were mortified at having done no more than talk to so little purpose. That part of Languedoc must have seemed more heretical than ever. Toulouse was always disaffected to Rome, and from generation to

* ALLIX, Albigenses, chap. xv.

generation had been so full of what Papists call heresy, that a monkish writer styles the city "mother of heretics, and tabernacle of robbers." Bernard, after his visit, wrote that the plague had seized the whole population; that, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, there was scarcely any soundness. There, he said, the heretics were chief among the people, and ruled in the Clergy: when heretics spake, they were listened to with admiration; but if a "Catholic" opened his mouth, people said, "Who is this?" He complains that they had Missionaries who went to preach at a distance, and had even other Gospels, referring evidently to the vernacular translation. Raymond V., the Count of Toulouse, wrote to the Abbot and Chapter-general of the Cistercians, repeating the same statement, asking their advice and prayers, saying that the spiritual sword was not sufficient, but that his material sword was at the service of the Church. He expressed a desire that the King of France would come to make an end of the evil by his presence, and offered to throw open the towns to his troops, put the fortified places into his hands, point out the heretics, and shed his own blood, if necessary, to crush the enemies of Jesus Christ. The King of France, together with the King of England, almost determined to accept the invitation; but, fearful of hazarding their dignity in such an expedition, devolved the work on Peter, Cardinal of Chrysogon, the Pope's Legate, attended by Archbishops Guerin of Bourges, and Pons of Narbonne; Bishops Reynolds of Bath, and John of Poitiers, and Henry, successor of Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, with several other personages. To these representatives of the Church were added Raymond, Count of Toulouse, the Viscount of Turin, and others, as representatives of royalty (A.D. 1178). They hastened with their formidable trains to the seat of heretical pravity; and the measure first determined on was to swear the Bishop of Toulouse, some of the Priests, the Consuls, and a few more, to present, in writing, the names of all the heretics they knew, none excepted on any consideration. The list grew rapidly, and a person of consequence was chosen as the first object of attack,—Pierre Moran, an aged gentleman who had two houses, one in town, and the other in the country, very rich, extensively related, and of great influence in Toulouse. Although a layman, he had held meetings in the evenings in one of his houses, and preached to the persons assembled. The Count sent Serjeants to cite him into his presence, and with some difficulty induced him to appear. With deep seriousness he rebutted accusations of Arianism and Manicheanism, but denied the doctrine held by his examiners, who instantly condemned him as a heretic. His age, respectability, and dignified Christian demeanour softened them for a moment, or seemed to soften. They allowed a tear or two to betray or simulate compassion, but sent him from their presence to the common gaol. Threatened with death, he was overcome, promised to recant, stood barefoot and in his shirt before the Commissioners, bound himself by oath to submit to the orders of the Legate, and the public were invited to see him do penance next day in the church of St. Sernin. The building was crowded to excess, and Pierre Moran was made to walk barefoot and naked as before through the congregation, scourged by the Bishop on

one side and the Abbot of St. Sernin on the other, at every step, until he reached the high altar, where he fell at the Legate's feet, besought reconciliation to the Church, and received the words of peace. Then the triumph over him might have been deemed complete; but it had only begun. *All his property was confiscated.* By way of penance, he was to quit the country within forty days, go to Jerusalem to serve the poor for three years, and meanwhile appear at all the churches in the city every Sunday, in the same guise of penitential degradation, to be scourged in each; and the house where his brethren had knelt with him in prayer was to be razed to the ground. The Legate and his company having summoned two others to appear before them in the cathedral on charge of heresy, they came, bringing a written confession of faith, resembling that of Alby, and were nearly released, when the zealous Count rose in great anger, declaring that they were liars. The Ecclesiastics then required them to clear themselves by oath, but, unable to prevail, called for lighted tapers, and excommunicated them with all possible solemnity. The Count next promised on oath, before all the people, to enforce the terrors of that sentence, and never to favour heretics. This done, the Commissaries gladly closed their labours, not venturing to take life, persuaded that they had made the most of their authority, covered only by royal sanction, and backed by the swords of their attendants, and lost no time in going each to his own place.*

Henry of Clairvaux, successor of Bernard, rewarded with a scarlet gown, and invested with the honours of Cardinal, Bishop, and Pope's Legate, went into Burgundy (A.D. 1181) to enforce discipline on the Clergy, and persecute the Albigenses. Instead of a train of Priests, he led an army, compelled Roger of Beziers and some other feudal Chiefs to abjure heresy, and returned to Rome, boasting that he had stormed a castle, that of Lavaur, and converted many to the bosom of his Church, outdoing his predecessors in monstrous descriptions of diabolical fables and inhuman licentiousness attributed to the Albigenses, who withdrew from the churches as soon as he had set his face towards Rome.† Waldensian Preachers and Missionaries renewed their efforts; and the intimate political connexion at that time existing between the southern provinces of France, and the northern kingdom of Spain, laid open the latter country to the innovations which were now spreading over a great part of Europe. The Pope, Celestine III., aware of this, sent a Cardinal Legate into Spain, who held a Council at Lerida, and exhorted the King of Arragon, Alonso II., as Marquis of Provence, and Lord of some other counties north of the Pyrenees, to issue an edict against the heretics, after the tenor of the acts of the Council of Verona. Alonso consented, and (A.D. 1194) commanded the Waldenses, the Inzapatados,‡ or Poor Men of Lyons, (these being only various names for the same people,) and all other heretics, to be expelled from his dominions, prohibiting all

* Faber, Vallenses, &c., book ii., chap. 10, 12; Fleury, lxxiii., 12, 13.

† Allix, Albigenses, chap. xxi.; Fleury, lxxiii., 35.

‡ So called from the Spanish word, *zapato*, "a shoe," because of the clumsy wooden shoes the Albigensian peasants wore; as, indeed, did others, but this marked their poverty, and was conspicuous in Missionaries.

his "vassals" to abet any in concealment, under penalty of being dealt with as guilty of treason, their property to be confiscated, of course. He commanded Bishops and Governors of towns to cause this edict to be published every Sunday in all their churches, under the same penalties. By All-Saints' day in that year the said heretics were required to be out of the country; and if any were found after that day, whoever, whether of high or low condition, should inflict evil, disgrace, or suffering on such persons, except death or mutilation, would thereby render himself grateful and acceptable to His Majesty, and, so far from incurring punishment, should be entitled to royal favour. After All-Saints' day every living dissenter, though he were indeed a saint, was delivered to the malice of whomsoever would plunder and torment him. Alonso soon passed into the state where every one receives righteous judgment; but his second son, Peter II., finding that the humanity of his father's vassals had shielded the Poor Men of Lyons from the effects of both excommunication and edict, assembled the Archbishop of Tarragona, and the Bishops of Gerona, Barcelona, Vique, and Elna, (A.D. 1197,) and, repeating the terrible threatenings of the former edict, commanded all civil authorities to drive the heretics beyond the bounds of their respective jurisdictions within a time appointed. All Governors and Judges were forthwith to swear before their Bishops that, within a week, they would discover and punish all heretics, or suffer the penalties due to them. This document, which was fortified by the signatures of almost all the grandees of Castile, implied an acknowledgment that the preceding mandate had not been effectual, and by its very stringency almost invited disobedience.*

In Nivernois, where popular superstition was more intense, the seceders appear to have been persecuted with greater violence. At Corbigni, some who had relapsed into Popery discovered their former associates; and Terric, their chief, as he is called, after he had been concealed for some time in a cavern, was dragged out and burnt. Several of the principal inhabitants of Charité on the Loire, when summoned to appear on the charge of heresy, fled, were excommunicated, and delivered to the secular arm. The Dean of Nevers, and the Abbot of St. Martin, in the same town, were marked as unsound in doctrine, suspended from their functions, and commanded to answer to charges before the Archbishop at Auxerre, having two Bishops for assessors. The Dean came boldly, with several Lawyers, well skilled both in canon and civil law; and the Archbishop seeing him so strongly environed, adjourned the case. The Abbot, who was accused of immorality also, appealed to the Pope, but was bound to appear again at Sens with the Dean. Both causes were remitted to Rome, where the Dean, probably the better man of the two, and conscious of a good cause, presented himself without delay, (A.D. 1199,) was heard in the Consistory, but gained nothing there, and was sent back to submit to the judgment of his Archbishop.†

* Llorente, Hist. Inquis. Española, cap. i., art. 4; Limborch, Hist. Inquisition, book i., chap. 9.

† Fleury, lxxv., 7.

No sooner had Innocent III. mounted the Papal throne than he applied himself, with the zeal of a new comer, to the extirpation of alleged heresy in the south of France (A.D. 1198). He wrote to the Archbishop of Auch a command to root it out of Gascony, employing to that end, if necessary, the arms both of Princes and of people. He sent two Cistercian Monks to carry the command into execution, or, in his language, to convert the heretics. An encyclical epistle bound the Bishops to receive the envoys favourably, help them in their labours, and execute, with inviolable fidelity, whatever they might think proper to be done against the stubborn heretics and their abettors. "We also," added the Pope, "command the Princes, the Counts, and all the Lords of your province, to assist them effectually against the heretics, with the power that they have received for the punishment of evil-doers. Therefore, after Friar Rainier shall have pronounced excommunication against them, the Lords must confiscate their property, banish them from their territories, and punish them more severely if they shall dare to linger. Now we have given power to Friar Rainier to compel the Lords by excommunications, and by interdict on their lands. We also write to all the people of your province, that as soon as they shall be required by Friar Rainier and Friar Guy, they march against the heretics; and to those who shall faithfully assist them we grant the same indulgence as if they had gone to Rome or to St. James." To make the matter more sure, the Pontiff sent copies to the other Archbishops of France, their Suffragans, and the Lords of the diocesses. These two Friars, let it be observed, were in reality the first Inquisitors, armed with powers independent of the Clergy, and responsible only to the Pope,* whose office thereby became exclusively that of arch-murderer; his single and incommunicable prerogative that of wearing out the saints of the Most High by the agency of his emissaries, while the episcopal office, notwithstanding its superior claims to a scriptural original, was reduced to a nullity.† Although some of the Bishops must have perceived the tendency of a proceeding that subsequently became the source of extreme dissatisfaction to their order, others no doubt thought themselves highly honoured by an injunction to send information to the Pope himself of heretics in their diocesses. We are indebted to the servility of Bertrand, Bishop of Metz, for a precious fragment in contribution to the history of evangelical progress. In the city and diocess of Metz (A.D. 1199) a great number of the laity, both men and women, "touched with a desire to understand the holy Scripture," had obtained a French translation of the Gospels, the Epistles of St. Paul, the Psalms, and some other books of the Old Testament, and applied themselves with so much earnestness to the reading of these portions of the sacred volume, that they held secret meetings, where they read and exhorted one another. They thought little of persons who neglected that study, avoided their society, and when some Priests had reproved them for their conduct, they plainly taxed the Ecclesiastics with ignorance, and proved from Scripture that they ought not to be hindered. They contrasted their own

* Fleury, lxxv., 8. † Llorente, Hist. Inquis. Esp., ii., 2; Limborch, i, 9.

familiar acquaintance with the word of God with the ignorance of the Preachers, and scrupled not to say that they could expound the Bible better. No doubt they could. And what said the Pope? He deigned to write a letter to the people of Metz, in these terms:—"Although the desire to understand the holy Scriptures, and to draw thence subjects of exhortation, is rather laudable than reprehensible, those persons appear much to be blamed for holding their conventicles in secret, for taking upon themselves to preach, for deriding the simplicity of the Preachers, and despising the company of those who are not like themselves. Jesus Christ commanded his Apostles to preach upon the house-tops; and when interrogated by the High Priest, he answered that he had always taught publicly, and spoken nothing in secret. Besides, St. Paul says that there are different offices in the church, and that God has established some Apostles, others Prophets, others Teachers, and that they cannot preach except they are sent. But if these people answer that they have received an invisible mission from God, more excellent than the visible, they must be told that this inward mission being hidden, it is not enough merely to say that such an one is sent of God, since any heretic may say as much: he must prove it, either by miracles, like Moses, or by an express testimony of Scripture, like St. John the Baptist. Now, although learning is very necessary to Priests that they may teach, they who are learned should honour in them the sacerdotal ministry, and not despise their simplicity. It belongs to the Bishop to correct with gentleness the Priest who is subject to him; but it does not become the people proudly to reprove their Pastor. If the Pastor is unworthy, or unable to lead his flock, the case should be regularly laid before the Bishop, who has power to appoint and also to remove from office. As for those who despise others, and pretend to be the only righteous, they must be ranked with the Pharisees; since from the beginning of the church there have been many saints that were not to be compared with these new perfect ones. And to them may be applied this saying of Scripture, 'Be not many masters.'" Innocent concluded his epistle by exhorting the citizens of Metz to cast off the delusion, and not allow themselves to be deceived by an empty semblance of piety and virtue. Then, in another letter to the Bishop and Chapter of Metz, he wrote thus:—"While Prelates should be careful to discover heretics, they should also take care not to wound the pious simplicity of the faithful by their impatience, nor to give them occasion of revolting against the Church. Now you have not said, in your letter, that those of whom you complain err in faith, or depart from sound doctrine; and we are also in utter ignorance of the reputation and conduct of those who have made this version of the Scripture, or of those who have made use of it in teaching. We therefore command you to exhort them earnestly to desist from what is reprehensible in their conduct, and by no means to assume the ministry of preaching, which becomes them not. Do you also ascertain carefully who is the author of this version, with what intention he made it, what is the faith of them who use it, what has excited them to teach, and if they respect the Holy See and the

Catholic Church, that we may better know what should be done." This despatch from the royal Pontiff no doubt put the Bishop and Chapter of Metz in the way of proceeding more systematically than before; and after a few months a report from them was forthcoming at Rome, bearing intelligence that some of those against whom the indefinite complaint had been transmitted had openly refused to obey the orders of the Holy See, being resolved rather to obey God than man. Others said the same in private. Notwithstanding prohibition, they continued their private meetings and their preachings. They were said to despise others, or, in truth, to reprove sinners; and were so attached to their version of the Bible that they protested a determination to disobey Bishop, Metropolitan, and Pope, should they require it to be suppressed. Three Abbots were then sent by Innocent to Metz, with orders to join the Bishop, summon the contumacious, endeavour to correct them, and, if unsuccessful, report the issue. So matters stood at the close of the twelfth century in France; the controversy with Rome no longer relating to the vices of the Clergy, the sacraments, saints, and ceremonies, but to the right which every man has to read and to obey the word of God.*

England was not unvisited by the early dawn of better times. William of Newbury relates that, in the reign of Henry II., some erring persons, as he calls them, (*erronei quidam,*) came into England, and were supposed to be Publicans, or Paulicians, of whom there were many in the broadest provinces of France, Spain, Italy, and Germany, multiplied, to borrow the language of a Prophet, above the sand of the sea; sometimes concealed in hiding-places, because of persecution; but, at other times, ranging the land without restraint: rustic and unlettered men, dull in argument, but immovable in purpose, and, having once tasted the cup of poison or of life, as it was diversely regarded, seldom known to change. Hitherto, from the expulsion of the Britons by the Saxons, nothing had disturbed the quiescence of our forefathers, who slept under the leaden sway of Popes, Legates, and submissive Princes. But the seeds of truth were sown by a few foreigners, a little colony of about thirty Germans, who, probably to escape persecution, crossed the Channel, hoping to find refuge here. They made no stir, conducted themselves most inoffensively, and had a good man named Gerard at their head, distinguished by some fruits of education, and probably acting as their Minister. Indeed, they had to learn English before they could hold intercourse with their neighbours. After all, one person only was known to have adopted their opinions, an Englishwoman, who had probably shown them hospitality as foreigners, and become familiar with the manners and religious observances of her stranger-friends; and her convictions were attributed, by our eminently superstitious forefathers, to the power of witchcraft. That conversion, however, was probably unknown, when some persons, having discovered that they were of a strange sect, thought it right to lodge them all in prison. The King, hearing that so dread a novelty had entered his dominions, commanded a Council of Bishops to be holden at Oxford,

* Fleury, lxxv., 24.

and the sectarians to be there examined. Gerard, speaking for the rest, said that they were *Christians*, and received with reverence the doctrine of the Apostles. But they denied sacramental grace, bore with the charge of Manicheanism, implied or expressed, mildly declined controversy, refused to join the Romish Church; and, when threatened with punishment, their venerable advocate replied, in the words of the beatitude, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." The Bishops, therefore, had no more to do than to declare them heretics, and leave them to suffer any punishment that the King might think proper to inflict. By royal decision, the brand of heresy was to be laid on their foreheads, and, in sight of the people, they were to be beaten with rods as they walked out of Oxford, and forbidden to pollute the city again by their presence. When they heard the sentence, far from showing dismay, they appeared happy, and retired from the court rejoicing, leaving on the ear of the Bishops the words of our Lord, "Beati eritis cum vos oderint homines:" "Blessed are ye when men shall hate you." "So greatly," writes the historian, "were their minds deceived by the spirit of seduction." So triumphantly, we should say, were they supported by the Spirit of God. "Then," he adds, "that detestable company, having their foreheads cauterized, were subjected to a just severity: he who bore pre-eminence over them, on account of his ministry, suffering the dishonour of a double brand, on the chin as well as on the forehead. Their garments being torn down to the middle, they were publicly flogged, with resounding stripes driven out of the city, and, through the inclemency of the weather, (for it was winter, and a hard frost, and no one showed them the least pity,) they miserably perished."* More than a thousand years before, a satirist had enumerated Britons among the most rude and cruel barbarians of the known world; and this atrocious treatment of defenceless and unoffending foreigners, in which King, Bishops, citizens, and peasants all took part, demonstrates that Roman Christianity had done nothing, in all that time, for our country. We pass over a horrible massacre of Jews which took place about the same time at York, and wrongs innumerable sustained by that ancient people, both in England and abroad, because it is painful to relate such examples of barbarity, and because they belong to another branch of history. But murder of Jews and Germans cannot appear strange to any one who observes the constitutional obduracy and impetuosity of the higher Clergy towards their brethren, as displayed by Anselm of Canterbury and his Bishops. English Priests had still been permitted to take wives, perhaps because they would not submit to be prevented; but Council after Council, and letter after letter from the High Priest at Rome, commanded them to turn their wives out of doors, never see them again, except in the street in the presence of two witnesses; and threatened married Priests with degradation, and, consequently, ruin. Great difficulty had dissolute Popes and Cardinals to quench the spark of honesty and manly honour yet remaining in the bosoms of poor parish Priests; and at one time they were so much perplexed in

* Guliel. Neubrig. Rer. Anglicar. lib. ii., cap. 13, cited by Faber, Vallenses, &c., ii., 8.

their ungodly and inhuman enterprise, that the Archbishop required, in writing, the Bishop of Norwich and other persons "to persuade the people of Norfolk and Suffolk that, *as they professed Christianity*, they should subdue them, as rebels against the Church, and *utterly drive both them and their wives out of the country*, placing Monks in their room."* Here, then, is pure sacerdotal Christianity, to raise the mob on all the married Priests of Norfolk and Suffolk, with stones and bludgeons, to drive them, their wives, and little children, out of every town and village, on a cold winter night, it might be, none showing the least pity, that the rebels might perish like the martyrs at Oxford.

The third Council of Lateran and that of Verona were of great importance in relation to subsequent events. The former was held by Alexander III., (A.D. 1179,) during the persecution of the Albigenses in the south of France. To give efficiency to the priesthood, who had now to cope with "heresy" almost everywhere, it was ordained that in every cathedral there should be a master maintained, to give gratuitous instruction to poor Clerks. There were many regulations tending to the same object, and others relating to Jews and Saracens; but the last canon is the most remarkable. It set forth that the Church, although she rejects bloody executions, does not refuse to be aided by the laws of Christian Princes; and the fear of bodily punishment sometimes drives people to the spiritual remedy. Heretics, under the names of Catharines, Patarines, and Publicans, were become so strong in Gascony, the district of Alby, the territory of Toulouse, and elsewhere, that they no longer hid themselves, but taught their errors publicly. They were therefore put under anathema, both they and their protectors, and even any who should presume to transact any business with them: if they died in sin, there was to be no oblation for their souls, and the bodies were not to have Christian sepulture. As for certain provincial heretics, in Brabant, Arragon, Navarre, and other places, who paid no respect to churches or monasteries, who spared neither widows nor orphans, nor age nor sex, who pillaged and laid waste everything as if they were Pagans, (which is quite a new piece of description,) it was equally ordained that they who listened to them, retained or protected them, should be read out in the churches every Sunday and feast-day, as excommunicate, and not absolved until they should have renounced their pestiferous society, and abjured their heresy. All who had been engaged with them by any agreement were informed that they were released from all homage or oath which they might have rendered. All the faithful were required, for the remission of their sins, courageously to oppose their ravages, and take up arms to defend Christians against those wretches, whose property ought to be confiscated; and it was declared that Princes might reduce them to slavery. All who, being truly penitent, should die in fighting with such persons, were assured that they need not doubt of receiving pardon of their sins, and eternal glory. (Here we have a taste of the Korân again.) Two years of indulgence were offered to all who would take up arms in the holy cause; the Bishops might enlarge this bounty; and, while so fighting, they were to be

* Foxe, Acts and Monuments, vol. ii., p. 160.

privileged persons, under the protection of the Church, like those who visited the holy sepulchre. Those who despised the exhortations of the Bishops, to bear arms against sinners, should be excommunicated. And Bishops who did not vigorously enforce this decree were to be suspended from the functions of their office.* It is said that at this Council some poor Waldenses made their appearance, bringing a French book, as a specimen of their writings, and asking permission to preach. If so, they had a more tolerable reception than might have been expected. A waggish Clerk was desired by the Pope to examine them theologically. The selection of the examiner was a signal for merriment; and after the third question they were dismissed amidst roars of laughter.† They were probably weak folk, who reverenced the Pope, while they could not be satisfied with Popery.

Lucius III. celebrated a Council at Verona, (A.D. 1184,) whither he had gone in consequence of a quarrel with the Romans. The Council was graced by the presence of the Emperor; and they accepted, from their spiritual head, a constitution to the following effect:—"The vigour of the Church ought to be aroused to abolish the various heresies which have begun to spring up in all directions; especially since they have found support in the imperial power. Therefore, in the presence of our dear *son*, the Emperor Frederic, with the advice of our *brethren*, the Cardinals, Patriarchs, Archbishops, and Bishops, and of many Lords assembled from diverse parts of the world, we condemn, by this decree, all heresies of whatsoever name; among others, the Catharines and Patarines, and those who are falsely called Humiliati, or Poor Men of Lyons, the Passagiati, Josephins, and Arnoldists. We place them all under a perpetual anathema. And because some, under pretence of piety, arrogate authority to preach, we comprehend under the same anathema all who shall dare to preach in public or in private, without having mission and authority from us and the Bishop of the place; all who *think* or teach otherwise than the Roman Church, touching the sacrament of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, baptism, remission of sins, marriage, and the other sacraments; and, in general, all those who shall have been judged heretics by the Roman Church, by each Bishop in his diocess, with the counsel of his Clergy, or, the see being vacant, by the Clergy alone, or, if necessary, with the advice of neighbouring Bishops. We also condemn all who shall give entertainment or protection to these heretics, whether they be called Comforted, Believers, Perfect, or known by any other superstitious name. And because the severity of ecclesiastical discipline is sometimes despised by those who do not comprehend its power, we ordain that those who shall be manifestly convicted of the abovesaid errors, if they be Clerks or religious, be deprived of every order and benefice, and abandoned to the secular power, to receive convenient punishment; unless the offender, as soon as discovered, makes abjuration in the hands of the Bishop of the place. The layman also shall be punished by the secular Judge, unless he makes abjuration. Suspected persons shall be punished in

* Conc. Lateran. iii., decret. 27.

† Faber, Vallenses, &c., book iii., chap. 12.

the same manner, unless they prove their innocence by due purification; but those who relapse after abjuration or purification shall be left to the judgment of the secular authority, without being heard again, and the property of Clerks shall be applied, according to the laws, to the churches they had served. This excommunication against all heretics shall be renewed by all the Bishops at the grand solemnities, or when occasion shall be presented, under penalty of being suspended for three years from episcopal functions." And, after some directions to Bishops and others, the decree continues:—"We also ordain that Earls, Barons, Rectors, and Consuls of cities and other places, promise on oath to follow the monition of the Bishops, to aid the Church effectively against heretics and their accomplices, when required, and apply themselves in good faith to execute to the utmost what the Church and the empire have ordered in this matter. If not, they shall be deprived of their dignities, not admitted to any other, and shall be excommunicated besides, and their lands laid under interdict. The city that resists this decree, or that, being informed by the Bishop, shall neglect to punish transgressors, shall be cut off from the commerce of other cities, and lose episcopal dignity. All the abettors of heretics shall be branded with perpetual infamy, and as such be incapable of being advocates, or witnesses, or of holding any public office. Those who are independent of the Bishop, and subject only to the Holy See, shall nevertheless abide by the judgment of the Bishops as delegates of the Holy See, their privileges notwithstanding."

This aggression on the civil liberties of Christendom has been extenuated by the plausible, yet feeble, allegation that the temporal power concurred with the spiritual, and that therefore the laity, as well as the Clergy, had only to submit to the decision of their superiors in that Council. But every one must know that the incessant conflict between the two powers, which contributed largely to the turbulence of those ages, could not be ended by now and then an amicable interview of Emperor and Pope. The actual union of powers in a swarm of Prince-Bishops, and the prostration of regal dignity in Priest-ridden Kings, left the civil magistracy of Europe devoid of energy, and the people shorn of their strength. And if there had been no such disagreement or usurpation existing, as to preclude the possibility of a common understanding between the hierarchy and the states, nor any usurpation of secular power by the Church, it would even then be vain to imagine that Frederic at Verona could represent the interests, or would be very careful to guard the rights, of nearly all Europe. What really appears in these two Councils, and in the intermediate proceedings of the Legate Henry in France, is the beginning of the Inquisition. Bishops were, by any means, to inform themselves of the private actions and opinions of all persons at whom the finger of detraction or cupidity might point; common rumour or malicious information was to supersede legal evidence; persons were to be classified in secret registers as suspected, convicted, penitent, or relapsed; correspondent penalties were to be inflicted; the secular arm was to wield the sword of vengeance in obedience to the ecclesiastical head. As yet, indeed, Inquisitors-general and their subalterns

were not appointed, the Bishops were not laid under the terror of a Holy Office; but Commissioners, not ordinary Legates, were sent to supply the deficiency of zeal or courage in the Bishops, for the inquisition and extirpation of heresy, and their will was to be sovereign, their decision without appeal. And although the Bishops were temporarily appointed to act against heretics, that was not to be done by virtue of their office as overseers, but in pursuance of a special delegation of power from the Pope.

And here we must also mark the inaccuracy of a vulgar apology for the Church, that the Inquisition, not she, has been guilty of those solemn and judicial cruelties. The third Council of Lateran, or eleventh of those called General, the Council of Verona, all the Popes, and every ecclesiastical body contemporary with the defections from the Romish Church, from the pontificate of Alexander III. to that of Leo X., and all Popes and Councils from Lateran to Trent, have maintained the doctrine of which the Inquisition was—thank God we cannot now say *is*—the full expression. Each act of the Inquisition was as truly that of the Church, as the acts of the executive are those of the State.

Facts will be adduced to show that the majority of the Clergy, who, in their own estimation, are the Church, always cherished that murderous institution, and resisted the endeavours of the laity to effect its abolition; but it is encouraging to observe, even amongst them, the leavening of a better principle, the element, not of reform in Popery, which is impossible, but of a development in the condition of the nominally Christian world which we had not yet been so happy as to witness. Some expressions of Fleury—an accomplished and liberal, if not altogether unbiassed, historian, nor sufficiently careful to separate fact from fable—deserve notice, as showing, once for all, the spirit of an important class of persons within the Romish Church. "Of all changes of discipline," he writes, "I see none that has more discredited the Church than the severity exercised against heretics, and other excommunicated persons." After enumerating examples of tolerance in earlier times, marking the eighth century as the age in which the holy discipline of gentleness and long-suffering was forgotten, and giving instances of censurable severity while as yet the Church endeavoured to avoid the crime, or at least the infamy, of shedding blood, he points out a discrepancy between the theory and the practice of his brethren. "In practice this has not been always followed. When Pope Innocent III. wrote to King Philip Augustus to employ his arms against the Albigenses, and when he caused a crusade to be preached against them in France, was that rejecting bloody executions? I shall speak of the Crusades in another discourse: here I am only speaking of the persecution of heretics; and I confess that I cannot bring the conduct of the Ecclesiastics of the thirteenth century to agree with that of the saints of the fourth. When I see Bishops and Cistercian Abbots at the head of those armies which made such slaughter of heretics, as at the taking of Béziers; when I see the Cistercian Abbot desiring the death of the heretics of Minerbe, although, being Monk and Priest, he did not

dare to condemn them openly; and when I see the Crusaders burning those unhappy people with so great glee, as said the Monk of Vaux-Sernai in many passages of his history; in all this I no longer recognise the spirit of the Church."* These are indeed sorrowful reflections, (*tristes reflexions,*) but honourable to the learned Prior of Argenteuil, with whom we join in the inevitable conclusion that in the Church of Rome the spirit of the church of Christ is no longer to be recognised. The truth is, that the spirit of that Church is tyrannous, even over her own members. The inferior Clergy were oppressed equally with the laity, and the humiliation of both went on with equal progress. We have just seen Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, endeavouring to raise the people of Norfolk and Suffolk upon the parish Priests of those counties, who were thus excited to employ sticks or stones for the chastisement of their spiritual Pastors, at the instigation of their own chief Minister, and of a future *saint*. A curious letter of the same dignitary gives a glimpse of monastic discipline in his day. A certain Monk was reported by his Abbot to have presumed to say that he would rather whip himself than be whipped by order of his monastical Superior, that he would prefer doing voluntary penance to being flogged at the discretion of another. Anselm piously composes a lengthy epistle to teach him otherwise. Kings and rich proud men command themselves to be whipped, and this he calls "kingly." Monks are whipped contrary to their own desire, and this kind of whipping he properly calls "monkish." "Therefore, be thou sure that one whipping of a Monk by obedience is of more merit than innumerable whippings taken by his own mind. But whereas *he is such* that he ought always to have his heart ready, without murmuring, obediently to be whipped, we ought to judge him then to be of a great merit, whether he be whipped privily or openly." † The principal form of this oppression in the twelfth century was frequent coercion of incontinent Clerks, as they were called; forcible injunction of celibacy, severing the Clergy from all domestic ties, breaking their spirit, and placing them at the mercy of their superiors. Stubborn resistance and even murderous revolt were provoked, adding guilt to degradation; but such proceedings were ineffectual to remove the evil.

Not only Rome, but Jerusalem also, called a holy city, was the seat of a temporal power that abused the sanction of Christianity. The warriors who had won the city, and a few places of lesser consequence, would not, indeed, submit to the desire of a Patriarch to take the reins of government into his hand, as one superior to all secular jurisdiction; but they allowed the Clergy exorbitant power in their petty kingdom; bishoprics were ridiculously multiplied, Prelates sat with Barons to elect the Sovereign and to rule the State; the crown was set on the head of the person so elected by the hand of the Patriarch, not so much a Minister of God, as representative of the Church, and especially of the supreme Pontiff; heresy was punished by confiscation, apostacy by burning; Moslems were vexed

* Quatriéme Discours sur l'Histoire Ecclésiastique, sect. xiv.

† Foxe, Acts and Monuments, vol. ii., p. 171.

or murdered in the name of Christ on every pretext or opportunity; ecclesiastical interests were craftily and greedily promoted, while those of the nation were perilled by rapacity, jealousy, and faction. The knighthood of Jerusalem were barbarously chivalrous towards pilgrims; but honour, or even bare compassion, towards a vanquished Moslem was no part of their chivalry; and, in mad forgetfulness of the small extent of that newly-acquired territory, imperfectly defended against innumerable hosts of Saracens, they provoked hostility by contempt, rapine, and every form of reckless insolence. Christianity, as, by desecration of that sacred name, the religion of the Franks was called, was probably inferior, in the eye of the world, to the dark and intolerant system of Islâm. The Jerusalem Christians had to cry for help, and Europe was again invited to enter on crusade. The history of those wars must be sought elsewhere; but some notice of them is necessary to complete the picture of a Church busied in destroying men's souls, rather than in saving them.

While the Pope, Eugenius III., was at Viterbo, (A.D. 1145,) and Rome under the sway of Arnold of Brescia, some Armenian Bishops, deputed by their Metropolitan, presented themselves at his feet to solicit communion with the Roman Church. If their tale may be credited, they had slowly passed through perils by land and sea for the space of eighteen months; their Catholic, or Patriarch, had a thousand Bishops under his jurisdiction; and they had been involved in minute controversy with the Greeks. But their Catholic had been driven from his see by the Turks or Tartars;* they were rent into factions, and sought a centre of ecclesiastical unity in the expatriated and feeble Pontiff. At the same time, a Syrian Bishop appeared before Eugenius, to ask his sanction of a demand urged by himself and brethren at Antioch, to enjoy a tenth of all spoils taken from the Saracens, after the precedent of Abraham, who had given a tenth of the spoils to Melchizedec. Tidings also came of the fall of Edessa into the hands of the Turks, and of the perilous condition of Jerusalem. The Pope, recently elected to the pontificate, and taken from monastic retirement, to borrow the comparison of Bernard, like a babe from the bosom of his mother, had not energy nor opportunity to help Edessa and Jerusalem while the gates of Rome were shut against him; but Bernard supplied the deficiency, and preached in France, urging to the holy war with a force and authority over Princes, like that which Peter the hermit had exerted on the common people. The King of France had already determined to cross himself, and gave the weight of royal authority and example to aid the exhortations of the Abbot. Both these personages pleaded for the kingdom of Jerusalem as if it had been the kingdom of heaven,

* These names, which originally belonged to single tribes, and were afterwards applied to entire peoples, are sometimes interchanged. In the present instance, some historians attribute the troubles of Armenia to the Turks, but it is, perhaps, more exact to say Tartars, at whose head Genghiz Chan and his successors struck terror into the inhabitants of all Asia, and some part of Europe.

and the second Crusade resulted from that movement. Bernard wrote a circular letter exhorting the people of Europe to fulfil the will of God, and above all other inducements placed the *merit* of such devotion. Almighty God, he affirmed, had deigned to call to his service murderers, thieves, adulterers, and perjured men, to make himself debtor for their services, and pay them in pardons and eternal glory. But many thought that if sin could be blotted out by killing Saracens, the murder of Jews must be at least equally effectual; a monkish Preacher of the Crusade on the banks of the Rhine preached up death to the Jews, and multitudes of that people were massacred. St. Bernard found it in his conscience to reprove the zealot, and to teach that the descendants of Ishmael might be meritoriously slain, but not those of Jacob; and the mystery of his distinction was removed by an exhortation of the Abbot of Clugni, addressed to St. Louis, to spare the lives of the Jews, but to take their money, which could not be forthcoming if the nation were extinct. The advice was taken: blood ceased to flow, gold being exacted in its stead; and two Sovereigns deserted their dominions to seek after glory in Palestine. The Emperor, Conrad III., assembled his army at Ratisbon, the French King, Louis VII., joined his at Mayence, and they simultaneously marched towards Constantinople (A.D. 1147). Treachery of the Greek Emperor, Manuel, fatigue, hunger, floods, and battles minished the forces of both Sovereigns; cabals and treason stole victory out of their hands. Damascus, for example, was lost ere well conquered, through the corruption of the army by Moslem gold, and the Monarchs returned with but a small remnant of their hosts. The soldiers of the West thenceforth regarded Palestine and Syria as the great field on which their prowess could be most gloriously displayed. Popular superstition was made subservient to the ambitious projects of their rulers. The Kings of England and France agreed (A.D. 1177) that they would take the Cross; but prudence again checked the zeal of Henry, and death frustrated the intention of Louis. The idea, nevertheless, laid hold on their subjects, and the Ecclesiastics incessantly fanned the reviving flame. But when intelligence came that Saladin, Lord of Egypt and Syria, had defeated the Christians in a great battle near Tiberias, and then taken Jerusalem, (A.D. 1187,) all Europe was smitten with terror, or burning with revenge. From Constantinople to London all were of one purpose; but France, Germany, and England made the greatest efforts to revenge the loss, and our own lion-hearted Richard showed himself excellent in valour. Yet that expedition only served to prolong, for a little, the existence of the unprofitable kingdom of Jerusalem; and Richard, made prisoner by his former allies, on his return homeward, was only restored to England on the payment of an immense ransom, to the injury of his subjects, who had not yet learnt that a religious war cannot be forwarded by the divine blessing, but is, of all others, the most hateful and most disastrous. A *fourth* time (A.D. 1195) Western Christendom was summoned by the publication of a Crusade, to waste human life and treasure in an armed migration for the recovery of Jerusalem. Saladin had died;

the Mohammedans were exhausted after long warfare, chiefly with Richard; and it was thought that the "Holy Land" might then be fully conquered. The English were suffering too severely from the preceding experiment to hazard a second, perhaps a fatal, failure; but some Germans and French obeyed the summons of Pope Celestine III. As if blighted by the breath of Heaven, the combined army wasted away before the scimitar of the infidel; the Chiefs quarreled as usual, some of them even deserted their camp at night; and they who had taken the sword shamefully perished by the sword. A *fifth* time the pretended Vicar of Christ endeavoured to call up the declining chivalry of Europe for the service of the Church. Foulques de Neuilly, whose history is briefly related on preceding pages, had been long labouring to persuade the populace to seek heaven by making war upon the enemies of Christianity; and in the last year of this century, (A.D. 1200,) some French and Flemish Knights, imbued, by the habit of persecuting heretics at home, with the spirit that breathes threatening and slaughter towards infidels abroad, responding to the exhortations of the Preacher, applied to the Venetian Republic for ships to transport their forces to the shores of Palestine; but, soon deserted by multitudes who had engaged to contribute or to serve, became involved in debt to the commercial people of Venice, and were compelled to pay them an equivalent: first, by storming for them a town on the coast of the Adriatic, that had revolted; and then, to the amazement of Europe, by aiding in the conquest of Constantinople on behalf of a pretender to the throne of the Greek empire, despite the threatenings of the Pope, who was scandalized at seeing Christian Crusaders turn their arms, blessed for warfare with Saracens, against Christians untainted with any of the proscribed opinions, free from any heresy learned out of the Bible.

Besides heretics and Turks, the Church had another set of enemies whom she deemed herself bound to subdue or to extirpate. Rational and religious conversion was not contemplated. For in every war with an unconverted northern people, even if sufficiently justified on other grounds, the Paganism of that people was counted as a reason for hostility, until the notion became established, that the rejection of Christianity was alone sufficient to justify invasion; hatred of the worshippers of idols was esteemed a virtue; and the holy wars were only distinguished from others by callous disregard of usages which ordinarily softened the horrors of the battle-field, or the severities of conquest. During the progress of the second Crusade in Syria and Palestine, the Pope readily acceded to the requests of a multitude of Saxon zealots, and sanctioned a Crusade against the Pagans of the North. Frederic, Archbishop of Magdeburg, the Bishops of Alberstadt, Munster, Merseburg, Brandenburg, Havelberg, and Olmutz, the Abbot of Corbey, and several lay Lords, led an army of sixty thousand men. Another armament of forty thousand was conducted by the Archbishop of Bremen, the Bishop of Werden, Henry Duke of Saxony, and other laymen. The King of Denmark, with the Bishops of his kingdom, put into motion all the Danish forces, both by sea and land, amounting to not fewer than a hundred thou-

sand men, about half of the united armies. This host made a simultaneous attack on the Sclavonians at several points, spreading devastation, and murdering unarmed multitudes. Many towns were burnt, and, among them, Malchow, with a heathen temple in its neighbourhood. After three months had been spent in desolation rather than war, the German Princes were reminded that those provinces would yield no revenue if emptied of inhabitants. The lay Chiefs of the Crusade began to calculate the mischief, the men participated in fear of the consequences of such an event, and the sword was sheathed, not at the bidding of mercy, but at the suggestion of cupidity. Peace was made on condition that the Sclavonians should receive the Christian religion, and release the Danish slaves. Baptisms were administered, but no one confessed Christianity with sincerity; old and weakly slaves were emancipated, and the workingmen retained. The Saxons were too politic to venture on extirpation, the Sclavonians too independent to bear the yoke of so hateful a religion, and the northern Crusade came to nothing.* One reflection, however, is suggested by it, that may serve the cause of charity. The Saxons were impelled by Popery to a general slaughter of their pagan neighbours, and only prevented from consummating their intention by a motive of self-interest. The Spaniards of the sixteenth century, so impelled, but not so restrained, did extirpate the aborigines of those regions of South America which fell under their power. Saxon and Spaniard were equally guilty; but although one race has produced a Luther, and the other none more illustrious in common fame than the Inquisitor and literary Cardinal Ximenes; they were both found obedient to the same impulse of bigotry. We Anglo-Saxons, then, have no reason to boast over the Spaniards, since Christianity on one side, and its corruption on the other, have made them and us what we now are; and proofs without number might be adduced to show that defects of national character are not intrinsic in the people, but originate in far deeper causes than diversity of climate, of race, or of political institutions. Without fear of exaggeration, we may venture to affirm, that the spirit of the Latin Church had become thoroughly martial. It was a military Church. There was no degree in either of the two divisions of the Clergy, secular and regular, that did not contribute of its members to the command or service of an army. The military orders naturally arose out of the habits and events of the twelfth century, and probably would have arisen under other names, if the Crusades had not produced Hospitallers and Templars. While Jerusalem was under the dominion of the Saracens, the Italian merchants had obtained permission from the Caliph at Cairo to erect a church in Jerusalem, where they might worship according to their own ritual. Besides a church, they had built two hospitals, one for each sex, and therein welcomed indigent pilgrims, as well as received the sick. After the conquest of the city, the hospital served for wounded soldiers also; and the humane diligence and self-denial of persons who voluntarily devoted themselves to that service, won universal respect. The institution was first

* Mosheim, cent. xii., part i., chap. 1; Fleury, lxix., 30.

enriched by the donation of an estate in Brabant, from Godfrey, and afterwards by similar offerings from the more wealthy Crusaders. From the character of laymen they advanced to that of Monks, paying to the Patriarch vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience; and about the middle of the century, having received some special privileges from the Pope, and finding themselves elevated in honours and wealth, the Friars took the sword, and became Knights. Careful gradation of rank and distribution of duties gave efficiency to the institution; within the precincts of the hospital, the sick and the indigent found succour, while Knights and Serjeants were ready at every call to vindicate the cause of an oppressed or suffering Christian, or to attack the enemies of the faith, whoever they might be. They served in the wars of the Crusades, and afterwards were found all over Europe, classed according to nation or language, living on endowments, and ready to draw the sword according to the vocation of their order. The Templars originated in the benevolence and valour of some Italians and Frenchmen, who bound themselves by vow to watch the roads frequented by pilgrims passing through their respective countries towards the Holy Land, and to protect helpless brethren from the perils of the way, especially from the attacks of robbers. They, too, wore a cross on their garments, and were thence called Knights of the Red Cross, or soldiers of Christ. As their number increased, they gradually organized a system of government for themselves; and as the Hospitallers had added the military to the religious character, they added the religious to the military. Their order was confirmed by the Council of Troyes (A.D. 1128). Baldwin I. gave them permission to occupy part of the royal palace at Jerusalem, near to the site of the temple of Solomon; and hence came their appellation, "Templars." These examples were soon imitated. A warlike emulation glowed in the bosoms of cloistered Monks, who proved themselves far more valorous than devout; and, if space permitted, we might describe the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre, and those of Avis, "the bird," who were created at Evora, in Portugal, with the Spanish orders of Alcántara, Calatrava, and St. James. We might trace to the benevolence of a poor German on the skirt of the Christian army at the siege of Acre, who spread a sail over some posts, and under its shadow, assisted by his wife, dressed the wounds of his countrymen, the order of Teutonic Knights, and follow the progress of about a dozen such institutions in this century alone.* Most of them originated in good intention, and many of the earlier volunteers deserved unqualified commendation. Their charity was fervent, spontaneous, and disinterested; but those Knights errant, armed at the same time with steel and with ecclesiastical prerogative and royal sanction, became injurious both to Church and State. Monastic vows, generally broken in cell and cloister, would much less be kept by men who led a predatory life; and dignity

* Mill's Crusades; Moreri's Great Historical Dictionary; Fleury's Ecclesiastical History. Most of the ecclesiastical historians, and indeed all the historians of the respective countries, in their accounts of the twelfth century, furnish information respecting these military orders.

of sentiment could not possibly be sustained by military Friars, whose rude frames might resist the shocks of war, penance, and excess, but whose minds were utterly unfurnished, and their ignorance notorious. As for the state of the Christians in the East, it may be described sufficiently by saying that, in Palestine and Syria, it was that of war with the Saracens, and that, beyond the boundaries of Islamism, a deteriorated Christianity still continued to make some progress. The successes of the Crusaders must have produced an impression of discouragement in the Mohammedans, who saw, for the first time, the tide of conquest turned against them. One of their Preachers in Tarsus of Cilicia endeavoured to lead a reformation, and preached boldly on the insufficiency of bodily ablution without purity of heart. Even in the cities of Aleppo and Bagdad, a Fakir went about the streets weeping, and crying with a loud voice that the religion of the Arabs would be blotted out by the Franks; and so strongly persuaded were many that it would be so, that in one of the chief mosques the pulpit was broken up, and the congregation solemnly declared the accustomed prayers to be ended (A.D. 1110, 1111). The panic might have spread, and the Crusaders might have obtained easy victories, if such manifestations had not aroused the Sultan of Bagdad to desperate but successful efforts. The eastern Christians did not thank the Latins for their interference. Unlike the pilgrims at Jerusalem, they had domestic interests at stake, and could foresee no advantage in being made enemies of the established government, or driven to the alternative of renouncing Christianity. Indeed their Mohammedan masters scarcely expected them to do this; and it is observable that, in some instances, as at the recovery of Edessa by Zinghi, the Turkish soldiers, after the first slaughter on storming the city, spared both the Syrian and Armenian Christians there, but destroyed every Frank whom they could find. Joscelyn, who afterwards attempted to reconquer that city, is branded by Abulpharagius with the epithet of "wicked."* The Armenian Christians were wasting their zeal in controversy with the Greeks; but in the remote regions of Tartary the name of Christ was honoured by the external homage, at least, of multitudes who had, at first, followed the example of their Sovereign, Prester-John, if that be his name or title;† and it would seem that the hierarchy of his barbaric court might vie with the princely retinue of the western Pontiff. But that glory soon faded; and the Christian Tartars brought no succour to soldiers of the Cross in Palestine. They waited, say some, for the Tigris to be frozen over, that they might march across. But the Tigris is never frozen.

Before passing from the twelfth to the *thirteenth* century we must pause for a moment to mark an abuse of authority in the discouragement and eventual suppression of vernacular languages in worship, a

* Abulpharagii Chronicon, Dynast. x.

† Mosheim, cent. xii., part i., chap. 1, gives the result of his reading in a few perspicuous sentences, and a note; but, in the absence of authentic history, they can afford little certain information. See also Asseman, Biblioth. Orient., tom. iii., pars ii., p. 488, *et seq.*; Ludolfi Comment. in Hist. Æthiop., pp. 218, 219.

measure introductory to the prohibition of versions of the holy Scriptures in these languages. The original language of a sacred book has indisputable pre-eminence over every version, and abides the only authentic document, the standard of comparison, the law to which appeal must be ultimately made for the settling of controversy. It has also an historical value, growing with advance of time. The Hebrew Scriptures are the chief example of an original text preserved amidst great and numerous vicissitudes, still sacred in the estimation of both Jew and Christian, superstitiously venerated by the most illiterate member of the synagogue, and not less revered by a Lowth than by a Maimonides. From this respect to the original language it is universally retained in Jewish worship, the liturgical books being also written in Hebrew. The New Testament, written in Greek, was for ages quite intelligible to the Greeks, and even to this day any Englishman who reads that language may find his way through a Romaic volume in a week. Ancient Greek, therefore, the liturgical language of the Greek Church, is not quite unintelligible in Athens, but utterly barbarian in St. Petersburg. The Latins received Christianity through the medium of their own language, as did all other nations, and their forms of public prayer were gradually compiled in the languages spoken by the people; but when the vulgar speech underwent change, (and the change was always a corruption,) the Greek, Latin, Syriac, Armenian, Coptic, and Ethiopic, as perhaps Arabic and other Liturgies now lost, retained their place in common use, with the sanction of antiquity, the charm of distinctness from low colloquial speech, and the recommendation of literary superiority. Indeed the vulgar dialects were seldom employed for writing; and even at this day, although the passion for writing is excessive, it would be difficult to collect written specimens of many dialects still spoken, or but recently extinct. Some, as the ancient Gaulish, are utterly lost, because not preserved in writing. Throughout a great part of Europe, the most civilized (using the term "civilized" comparatively) and the oldest nations were indebted for the little literature they possessed to the language of Roman conquerors; the Church was literally, as well as geographically, Latin; and the Bible, the service-book, the treatise of secular science or history, were alike written in Latin. The orthography of common dialects was not fixed, provincial differences precluded them from general use, and the one language of the imperial city was necessarily the medium of general communication. The same Preacher could make himself understood so late as the tenth century in all the pulpits of southern Europe; not to speak Latin was a mark of extreme ignorance; the accomplishment was expected, even though the speaker could not sign his name; and when Latin became so corrupted, that the illustration of glossaries is necessary for those who wish now to read the writings of the middle ages, so extensive an exchange had everywhere been made with the vernacular, that theological and many other terms were used by the common people in their most familiar language; *ergo, igitur, item, etiam,* and scores more, served for the commencement or the connexion of their sentences, or Latin combinations were borrowed to express ideas not yet embodied in the vulgar

phrase. In fairness to the old Roman Church it must be acknowledged that the use of Latin prayers and Latin Bibles was not, at first, a violent imposition. On one hand, the Priests were exhorted to translate the Scriptures and the principal formularies of confession to their congregations, just as the leaders of Jewish restoration translated the law of Moses from Hebrew into Chaldee on their return to Jerusalem, for the instruction of those who had lost the language of their fathers; and, on the other, the northern peoples of Europe, or at least several of them, had versions of the Bible and prayers for daily worship in their respective languages, Latin having never prevailed among them. This use of the vernacular was not resisted at Rome until, perhaps, the ninth century, when the desire for absolute uniformity had laid hold of many Ecclesiastics; but the resistance was not yet uniform, and we even find Pope John VIII. (A.D. 872—882) repeatedly protecting the northern congregations in the exercise of their established liberty. The case, however, of nations proselyted later is different. They neither had, nor cared to have, prayer in intelligible words. The ancient churches of Tomi, (Tomisvar,) on the coast of the Black Sea, those of the Sclavonians in Poland, and of the Germans under Charlemagne, still afforded distinct examples of worship in their respective languages. But the zealots of the twelfth century, the age of reviving persecution, would regard a mass in vulgar tongue as an insufferable expression of independence, and the power now exercised by the Bishop of Rome over all the churches of the West would make perseverance therein impossible; except for some time in Bohemia, and in Poland, where, by a concession wrung from the Pontiffs by that brave people, the Sclavonic liturgy was celebrated in the fifteenth century in the Benedictine college of St. Cross, under an indulgence like that which allowed the Mozarabic to be heard in an endowed chapel at Toledo. The obnoxious version of Waldo, the writings of the Vaudois of Piedmont, the association of Bible-readers at Metz, and the appeal made to the word of God by people of all ranks against the dominant superstition, determined the priesthood to forbid every where the use of an understood language to disclose the meaning of either Bible or Prayer-book; and it was, is, and yet will be, vain for the Romish laity to plead the authority of St. Paul to the pretended successor of St. Peter in condemnation of the unreasonable practice of locking up truth in Latin.* These observations are preparatory to the narration of a series of persecutions "for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ," that will be found in the next chapter. The fall of Ireland under the domination of Rome, the beginning of the woes of that unhappy country, is one of those initiatory events which mark the present period of our history. It may be briefly told. A discontented Bishop, Malachy O'Morgair, having, no doubt, private understanding with brethren of Romeward tendencies, crossed the seas, threw himself at the feet of Pope Innocent II., volunteered his services to bring Ireland into submission, returned in the character of Papal Legate, bearing preliminary pro-

* Villanueva, De la Leccion de las sagradas Escrituras en Lenguas vulgares, cap. ix.; Krasinski, Reformation in Poland, vol. i., part i.

posals, held a meeting, or, for greater dignity, we may say a synod, where fifteen Bishops, two hundred Priests, and a train of inferior Clergy, at his earnest entreaty, deputed him to present their homage to the Holy Father. Eugenius III., by that time succeeded to the Papal throne, gave him the second welcome, and despatched a Cardinal as Apostolic Legate, with four palls, to be worn by the four Archbishops. This livery was first accepted in the year 1152.*

CHAPTER V.

The THIRTEENTH *Century characterized*—SIXTH, SEVENTH, *and* EIGHTH *Crusades to the Holy Land and Egypt—Fall of the Latin Kingdom in the East—Fruitless Negotiations between the Latin, Greek, and Roman Churches—Crusades against reputed Heretics in France and Spain—Spanish Preachers in Africa—Crusades against Pagans in Livonia and Prussia—Political and religious Opponents of the Papacy persecuted throughout Europe—State of England, Scotland, and Ireland —Jubilees invented—Series of Events in the* FOURTEENTH *Century—Quarrels and Schism of the Papacy—Monasticism—Disaffection of Laity—State of Society—Persecutions in Italy—Germany—France—England—Wycliffe and the Lollards—Conclusion.*

By fire and sword the hierarchy of Christendom now endeavour to destroy every opposer of their ambition, whether at home or abroad. The Church, falsely so called, takes the world as its patrimony, to be subdued for the gratification of the priesthood, rather than won for Christ. From the Dead Sea to the Baltic, against Moslem, heretic, and Pagan, the leaders of the people rage, breathing threatening and slaughter. In former centuries we have read of devoted men, who counted not their lives dear unto them, but suffered martyrdom in pagan lands, while endeavouring to convert the savage inhabitants; but now the fashion is altogether changed. With one slight and even doubtful exception, that of some zealous Spaniards, who preached and were put to death in northern Africa, there is no record of an endeavour to spread the Gospel by persuasion only. The human mind began to be aroused in the last century, and in this is awakened to fury rather than to manly action. The schools afforded means and opportunity for study, and are now multiplied; but new generations of disputants arise to multiply again sects in philosophy, and heresies in religion. The populations of Europe supply a general militia for the service of Pope and Popelings. Thus are blind serfs either impressed into that service by force of an imperious necessity, or they waste away before the edge of the sword, or they "wander in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth." Papal and clerical authority are absolute, reason is prostrated, and there is not a Prince nor a nation within the compass of western Christendom that can dare to be independent. Efforts after independence are sometimes made, but fail without one exception. "They give their kingdom unto the Beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled." If the

* Mant's History of the Church of Ireland, chap. i., sect. 1.

hand of God were not seen in the events of the thirteenth century, as in those of every age, we should hasten on to later times; but that hand is visible; there are still some testimonies to the truth; and the assurance that the mercy of the Saviour is as really exerted amidst the horrors of persecution as in times of peace, alone enables us to invite the reader's attention through this chapter.

A succession of calamities had reduced the Latin kingdom in the East to a mere wreck; and the fragments remaining would have been swept away, but for incursions of the Tartars which diverted the forces of the Saracens, and quarrels of the Saracens themselves which prevented them from extirpating the Frankish intruders. Encouraged by this respite, the Christians of Palestine wrote to Rome for succour. Innocent III. caught at the occasion for gathering gold into his coffers, if not for adding to the territory and power of his Church, promised to march at the head of an army to the gates of Jerusalem, infused new zeal into the Prelates and Princes assembled in a great Council at Rome, and dispersed over Europe zealots who preached and begged for men and money. Perhaps the *sixth* Crusade so raised withdrew the military strength of France for a time from consummating a threatened destruction of the Albigenses. A mingled host, directed by the domineering counsels of a Legate, landed at the mouths of the Nile, and proceeded to besiege Damietta, in full confidence that both that city and Cairo would fall before them, that Egypt would be theirs, although Palestine was almost invincible, and that the Moslem power which had withstood the Cross in the Holy Land, would be crushed on the graves of the Ptolemies. Damietta fell, after the majority of its inhabitants had perished with hunger, and the Christians, laden with spoil, and fainting in the pestilential stench of unburied corpses, returned to their camp, and might have made good use of conquest, had not the Legate forced them, first by importunity and then by curses, to advance on Cairo; which they attempted, but could not reach the city, for the waters of the Nile had overflowed the banks of a canal, and a remnant only of the deluded army was permitted to retreat by the Saracens, who had rallied their forces, and magnanimously opened the granaries of Egypt to save that remnant from perishing with hunger, like their fellow-citizens of Damietta. The valour of the defeated Crusaders was extolled in the West, and contempt only was rendered to the prudent forbearance of the people whose territory they had unjustly invaded. Pope Honorius III. emulated the zeal of his predecessors in moving Europe to holy war, and distributed with incessant diligence indulgences, blessings, and anathemas, to entice the indifferent, and to compel the tardy. The Emperor Frederic II. was among the latter, until, finding himself excommunicated, and therefore forbidden to wear the Cross, he embarked in good earnest, despite the prohibition, treated first with the Sultan of Egypt, then landed in Palestine, claimed the kingdom of Jerusalem, endured the insolence of the Clergy, who loaded him with disrespect as excommunicate, obtained an armistice honourable for the Christians, and returned to Europe. Yet suspension of hostilities could scarcely be observed in a country where independent tribes were not restrained by the remote authority, and a *seventh*, an *eighth*, and a

ninth Crusade were distinguished by deeds of arms most brilliant in the estimation of the soldier, but affording no satisfaction to the Christian. In Europe, and especially in England, those wars were the pretext for arbitrary and exorbitant taxation, as people were excited, when under the influence of the prevailing mania, to cross themselves, and could only be released from the obligation by paying money, the Priests determining the amount according to the supposed ability of the person bound. In Palestine, Syria, and Egypt, the name of Christ was dishonoured by immorality, perfidy, and jealousies. Hospitallers and Templars often frustrated each other in the very war which they professed to regard as meritorious and holy, and turned their swords against their brethren, or betrayed them to the common enemy. Nothing could be more empty than their boasting of chivalrous honour; and, even while desperately courageous, they were often overwhelmed by inundations of Tartars or Chorasmians, who poured by myriads from the further East, in migrations like those which had wearied out the Roman hosts, and were not to be resisted by the disunited occupiers of Jerusalem. Town after town was lost. The Christians were shut up in Acre, covered with disgrace on account of internal strife and habitual injustice towards the natives of the country; and, on the 18th day of April, 1291, Acre was stormed by the besiegers, the town was soon in flames, a tempest hindered the flight of those who sought refuge on board ship, the swords of the Mussulmans were bathed in blood: and so ended the holy war, that had been prosecuted for two centuries in the name of Christ, with the commission of every folly and every crime that could dishonour that blessed name, and cover Christianity with infamy throughout the Moslem world. Popery, maddened under final discomfiture, as it had been infatuated throughout the enterprise, turned upon its own agents; and the suppression of the order of the Templars stands in history as a perpetual accusation of ingratitude and ferocious cruelty against the Romish priesthood. Their Grand Master, Jacques de Molai, was burnt alive in Paris (A.D. 1313). During these wars the attention of the elder oriental Christians was drawn towards the Church that could spare so much wealth and exert such gigantic efforts for the attainment of its objects on the western shores of Asia; and both Kings and Patriarchs entered into correspondence with the Popes, soliciting, in reality, military co-operation against the Mohammedans, and amusing them with feints of submission to Papal authority. Embassies were accordingly sent to Armenia and Russia; and the Tartars, who then wielded resistless power in central Asia, to the terror of all their neighbours, being utterly latitudinarian in religion, made no difficulty on account of diversity of creed, welcomed and amused an ostentatious commission from Innocent IV., as they had previously received one from Louis IX., King of France, but retained possession of Hungary, where their descendants are still known by their original name of Magyar.

Having made this brief note of the Crusades in the East, we now proceed to describe the persecutions of dissenters from the Church of Rome within the boundaries of Christendom. Those persecutions were also called Crusades.

Nowhere did persecution rage more fiercely than in France. Although the principal scene of those events was the south of France and the neighbouring provinces of Spain, or, as that territory was then called, Narbonese Gaul, reputed heretics were everywhere exposed to extreme danger. Evraud, a gentleman of Nivernois, intrusted with the management of the estates of Henry, Count of Nevers, had incurred the enmity of some of the tenants, who revenged themselves by charging him with heresy. Octavian, the Papal Legate at Paris, lost no time in proceeding against the heretic. On an appointed day, Evraud appeared before an assemblage of the Archbishops and Bishops of the kingdom, together with the Doctors of Paris, to answer the accusation. The Bishop of Auxerre undertook to act as accuser: many witnesses and some written documents substantiated the accusation. None could plead for an alleged heretic in that place. He was summarily convicted, handed over to the secular power, conducted back to Nevers, and burnt alive, "to the great contentment of the people." A nephew of his, William, Canon of Nevers, having been confirmed, by witnessing his uncle's martyrdom, in adherence to his principles, left the city, and, under another name, no more a Priest, was welcomed and honoured by the Christians of Narbonne.* Meanwhile the zealous Bishop had much to do in his own diocess with persons suspected of heresy, or of favouring heretics; but the work of inquisition soon began in earnest in Toulouse, (A.D. 1204,) although the Inquisition itself was not yet established. Two Monks, Peter of Castelnau, and Raoul, or Ralph, of Fontfroide, received powers from the Pope to act as *his* Inquisitors of heresy, independently of all episcopal authority or interference. Invested with these powers, they made their appearance in Toulouse, "stronghold of heresy," where the professors of evangelical doctrine enjoyed the patronage of the Count himself, Raymond VI., as well as of a neighbouring chief, Raymond Roger, Count of Foix. The two Monks condescended to preach and exhort the inhabitants to expel the heretics, among whom, of course, were to be numbered the liege Lords of that and the adjacent country. Finding, however, that the citizens were inaccessible to persuasion, they tried threats; and many—hoping to avoid the wrath of the King, and of the Emperor too, should his intervention be required, with consequent destruction of their property by pillage and confiscation—signed, by deputation, a document promissory of their best efforts to favour the Catholic religion, and contribute to the extirpation of heresy. In compensation for this trifling concession, (trifling, because the extent and application of the very term *Catholic* were perpetually contested,) the emissaries promised that they should be regarded and treated as Catholics. The Pope, encouraged by their report, added to this legation the Abbot of Cîteaux; gave the three a copious letter of instructions wherein the Bishops were said to have neglected their duty, and allowed heresy to grow up without restraint; and the Legates—for they were not yet called Inquisitors—were to recover heretics to the Catholic faith, if they could, or, if they could not, were to deliver over the pertinacious excommunicates to the secular arm,

* Fleury, lxxv., 35.

for confiscation of goods and infamy for ever, besides the punishment of death. They were to exhort Philip II., King of France, his eldest son, and the Counts, Viscounts, and Barons of the kingdom to proceed with firmness against the heretics, offering them the same indulgences as they would gain by going personally to the Holy Land to fight against infidels. And, that the three messengers might suffer no obstruction, Innocent gave them full pontifical authority to destroy, disperse, uproot, build and plant whatever should be necessary or convenient, to punish contradictors canonically, and to act, if even one of their number should be absent, throughout the ecclesiastical provinces of Aix, Arles, and Narbonne, or wherever heretics were to be found in France. Under the same date the indefatigable Pontiff wrote to the King, charging him to protect and help the three Legates, and presented a golden motive in the shape of an exhortation to confiscate the property of Counts, Viscounts, Barons, and any other citizens who should fail to contribute to the extirpation of heretics; and, if that did not suffice, to send Louis, his eldest son, to head an army for their destruction, that they who did not fear the spiritual sword, might feel the temporal. Notwithstanding all this, the King was unwilling to lend himself to the Pope; the Counts and other men of influence were generally reluctant to persecute, or even to leave unprotected, a people whom they esteemed for loyalty, peaceableness, and honesty, and in whose convictions some of them participated. The Abbot gladly accepted preferment to an archbishopric; the Friars would have preferred monkish seclusion to the prosecution of so difficult an undertaking; and the lingering zeal of the two remaining members of the legation was insufficient, because unsupported. The Pope, however, administered the cordial of encouragement, to revive their drooping strength, and sent a fatherly reproof to the King for his indifference, not sparing the Bishops, although they far better knew the strength of the Waldenses and their friends than the Bishop of Rome could know it. But one French Ecclesiastic manifested his loyalty to the Holy Father, who had made him Archbishop of Rheims, at that time no little dignity, and signalized the first month of his elevation by burning some persons at the little town of Braine. One of them was an artist, called Nicholas, famous throughout France (A.D. 1205). The inhabitants of Braine were, no doubt, intimidated by the murder of their townsmen; but the terror of that execution was not felt in Languedoc. The Monks were still dispirited, when a Spanish Bishop, Diego de Acebes, Bishop of Osma, having just visited Rome, and passing by on his way homeward, found them at Montpellier. Being a person of great energy and talent, but dissatisfied with confinement to the narrow circle of a diocess, and unable to obtain from the Pope a release from his obligation as Bishop, he gladly volunteered his services to assist them in a resumption of their work. After careful observation, he found that the Missionaries sent to recover the wanderers to their Church were exceedingly unpopular. People contrasted their splendid equipages, the trains of servants and cavalry that attended them, and their general extravagance and stateliness, with the poverty of the Waldensian and Albigensian Pastors, and

the simplicity of their followers. Frequently, when Peter and Ralph had finished their harangues, they reproached them with the licentiousness and cupidity of their brethren the Priests. Diego insisted that it was useless for them to attempt the conversion of heretics, unless they would preach by actions rather than by words, display frugality and austerity, keep their money out of sight, walk on foot, and imitate the Apostles. The Legates feared they should be accused of innovation if they took upon themselves, while representatives of Papal majesty, to lead such a mean life; but, considering the exigency of the occasion, said that if any person of authority would begin, they would follow. Diego, being a Bishop, and having been a courtier, too, but one that had lately assumed the monastic habit, offered to set the first example, as a man of authority; and accordingly sent away his body-guard of horsemen with his servants and luggage to Osma, retaining only one companion, a regular Canon and Sub-Prior of his cathedral, Domingo de Guzman, afterwards badly eminent in a career of persecution, and eventually known as St. Dominic. The Spaniard received the submission of his new colleagues as chief over the renewed enterprise, and established himself in France as a propagator of the faith. With the two Legates, transformed into poor mendicants, he made a journey of experiment. At the little town of Carmain they spent a few days in disputation with Baldwin, a Pastor, and William, the former Canon of Nevers, who had fled thence after the burning of his uncle; and contrived, if their adventures are correctly related, to excite a popular feeling to the prejudice of those persons, but could not deprive them of the protection of the lord of that place. Thence they went to Beziers, a town long pervaded with anti-Romish doctrine, and already visited by persecution. There were few there who bore the name of Catholic; and Peter was so hateful to the population, that Diego and his colleague advised him to go elsewhere, lest he should suffer violence. In short, the whole party left Beziers exceedingly discomforted. The Albigenses,* on the contrary, felt increasing confidence; and, as the Preachers professed to use argument only, and appeared as poor men, begging for alms from door to door, their Ministers proposed a conference for arguing out the questions of doctrine; which then, as now, divided the believers in holy Scripture from the followers of tradition and ecclesiastical authority. The challenge was accepted; moderators were appointed on both sides, men of authority, who should protect both parties against any tumult of the people; the place of conference was to be free and safe; the subjects of controversy should be agreed on beforehand; the debate was to be continued until the question in dispute was settled; the word of God was to be the only standard of appeal. On one side were the three Preachers, an Abbot, two Priors, and a train of Priests and Monks, with the Bishops of Villanueva and Auxerre, as moderators; and, on the other, Arnold Hot, an Albigensian Pastor, with some others not named, having on their part two men of influence named Bot and Riviere. Arnold delivered a paper

* Albigenses we say for the sake of brevity. It is often impossible to determine with certainty how far the name "Albigense" or "Waldense" is to be preferred, or whether both may not be employed.

to the Bishop of Osma, containing three propositions: 1. That the mass and transubstantiation are the invention of men, and not the ordinance of Christ and the Apostles. 2. That the Church of Rome is not the spouse of Christ, but the Church of confusion, drunk with the blood of the martyrs. 3. That the polity of the Church of Rome is neither good nor holy, nor established by Jesus Christ. The Bishop asked a fortnight to prepare his answer, which was granted; and, at the expiration of that time, the company assembled, and the Bishop, producing a large paper, read a carefully elaborated reply. To this Arnold answered without further preparation, speaking, during long sessions, on four successive days; and then demanded proofs of the Romish doctrine, drawn from the holy Bible only. This was a challenge not to be fairly met; and, after vain attempts to parry the strokes of scriptural truth, the whole company of Bishops, Priests, Legates, and Monks precipitately withdrew, complaining of unfair dealing, in order to cover the disgrace of their retreat. The Bishop of Osma having remained in France but a short time after this conference, returned to Spain, (A.D. 1206,) yet stopping by the way at Pamiers to hold another, which led to no result beyond mortification at the patronage afforded to heretics by Raymond Roger, Count of Foix, who shocked the Bishop and his brethren by entertaining them and their antagonists in his palace with equal hospitality, the Countess being a Waldense.* The Papal emissaries were evidently perplexed. They could not command sufficient force for the attainment of their object; the public mind was alienated from their Church; their opponents in controversy were unmanageable; and, in taking the last resort of conference with those whom they came to silence by authority, they had utterly miscalculated their ability. The Bishop of Osma quitted the field, and died soon afterwards. His attendant Dominic remained in France, to await an opportunity for resuming hostility against heretics. Ralph had no courage left for the difficult crusade, and retired to a monastery, where he died; but Peter, irritated by the contempt he had so deservedly incurred by arrogance and cruelty, stood his ground; and, being stimulated to fresh exertions by communications from Rome, applied for help to the nobility of Provence; some of whom formally abjured heresy, in the usual manner, and swore to cleanse the country from those who were infected by it. The Count of Toulouse had hitherto refused to take any part in persecution; and, being known to entertain the same opinions as those whom he protected, was solemnly excommunicated, treated by the Popish nobles as an enemy; and they were actually waging war against him, at the instigation of Peter, together with the Abbot of Vaux Sernai, who had succeeded the Spanish Bishop as his colleague, and chief of that mission, when he gave way to fear, and made some overtures to the Legates, which, however, did not satisfy them, and the negotiation ended in a quarrel with Peter, whose insolence became unbearable. This quarrel took place at St. Gilles. Peter instantly left the town with his colleague, and is said to have been

* Fleury, lxxvi., 12, 14, 27; Llorente, Inquisicion, &c., cap. ii., art. 2; Allix, Albigenses, chap. xvii.

followed by some one who avenged the Count by stabbing him as he was about to cross the Rhone. The blame of the murder was, of course, laid on Raymond, who could not be proved to have had any complicity in the crime; but it was a sufficient pretext to bring on him the dreadful consequences, and to deluge his country with blood. The Pope wrote a long letter to the principal persons of the provinces of Narbonne, Arles, Embrun, Aix, and Vienne, exhorting them to inflict vengeance on the delinquent. He styled Peter a martyr; assured them that miracles would have been wrought at his tomb, but for the unbelief of the people; and that he had commanded the Archbishops and Bishops to renew their diligence in extirpating heresy, and display greater zeal in preaching faith and reconciliation to the Church. The reputed murderer of "that holy man" was denounced as excommunicate, with all his accomplices, abettors, and defenders; and all places where such persons might be found were placed under interdict, until they should be driven out. That sentence was to be read from the altars every Sunday, until the criminals should be put out of the way by death, or, having gone to Rome, should have there received absolution. The obedient Bishops promised remission of sins to whomsoever should undertake to avenge the innocent blood of the new martyr, by making war upon heretics, destroying their bodies, to hasten the perdition of their souls. Two Bishops, Foulques of Toulouse, and Navarre of Couserans, made speed to Rome, where they besought the Pope to succour the Church, exposed to extreme danger in the disaffected provinces. Raymond also sent messengers to exculpate himself, and gave the Pontiff an opportunity to gain his point the more certainly, by sending back emissaries to Toulouse with confidential instructions to employ soft language, but make no concession; as also to proceed to Paris, and endeavour to persuade the King to make war upon the Count. In the latter part of their commission they were not successful; but the spirit of the age favoured the military enterprise; a new set of Crusaders made their appearance, wearing the Cross on the breast, instead of the shoulder, to distinguish them from pilgrims to the Holy Land; and the persecuted Count, apprehending that he would be the first victim, negotiated a reconciliation with the Pope, and, having done this, even consented to wear the Cross. Reconciliation was purchased by a shameful penance. Stripped to his shirt, he came into the church at St. Gilles, and, in the presence of the Legate, with about twenty Archbishops and Bishops, swore obedience to the Pope, received absolution, and engaged to destroy heretics and persecute the Jews. Two gentlemen only brooked the indignity of taking the Cross with their liege; and that no time might be lost in making use of the new Crusaders, who might sympathize with the persons whom they had sworn to murder, if allowed opportunity for intercourse, an assemblage of them was convened to be at Lyons from all parts of France on St. John's day, or about that time (A.D. 1209). An immense multitude of horse and foot encamped there; and, having been reviewed by the Legate and other Ecclesiastics, marched under their blessing upon the beautiful city of Beziers, which was chiefly inhabited by Albigenses. After taking

their position before the city, they sent to the Bishop a list of persons whom he was to require the inhabitants to give up as heretics; and invited any who might still regard themselves as Catholics to accept deliverance from impending destruction, by coming out of the city. But the inhabitants despised the summons to surrender their fellow-citizens to certain death; none accepted the favour offered to Catholics, in distinction from others; and when the Crusaders expected to see a multitude of timid folk abandon the city to their arms, a strong party of bowmen made their appearance and provoked battle by a shower of arrows. The challenge was accepted, and the champions of that murderous apostacy which vaunted itself in the name of Catholic, stormed the city, gave no quarter, but slaked their vengeance in the blood of its inhabitants. Not one escaped. Men, women, and children were put to instant death; and, despite the privilege of sanctuary which even an assassin might enjoy at any altar in Rome, seven thousand persons were butchered in one church at Beziers. "Kill away," said a Monk to some soldiers who were beginning to relent: "the Lord knoweth them that are his." Cupidity itself sickened at the view of so much carnage: the Priests could not allow burial to the countless corpses of the excommunicate; therefore pestilence might return, as an avenging angel, upon themselves, from so great a mass of putrefaction; a city, defiled so thoroughly with heresy seemed unfit to continue any longer; it was therefore determined to finish the exploit by the semblance of a burnt-offering, and Beziers was accordingly burnt down on the same day, leaving the ashes of sixty thousand victims under smoking ruins. This done, the horde retired; and the Romish historian, ashamed and shuddering as he places on record so foul a deed, incredibly declares that the soldiers did all without permission, and even contrary to the wishes of their leaders; yet relates that the worshippers of St. Magdalene, on whose day the massacre took place, must have been signally avenged of the blasphemies those heretics had pronounced against her. From the site of Beziers the zealots marched to Carcassone, where they took a suburb, by way of intimidating those within the city, and then continued their operations of siege; while the Bishops, the Abbots, and all the Clergy, whose hands were deemed too sacred to handle steel, formed themselves into order of procession, and, keeping beyond the range of bow-shot, blasphemously chanted the hymn, *Veni, Sancte Spiritus*, "Come, Holy Ghost, our hearts inspire." Carcassone might have been annihilated also; but as the leaders of the attack considered that a deletion of that place also would discourage the soldiers by again depriving them of booty, and leave the future Lord of the land without a sufficient place of residence for himself and followers, they determined to act otherwise, and imposed capitulation on the inhabitants, with the hard condition that they should all quit the city, carrying nothing away, but should walk out with nothing more than a single under-garment. This condition was fulfilled on the 15th of August, 1209, and Carcassone became, until the fall of Toulouse, the capital of the conquered territory, while its citizens were dispersed without shelter, to be branded as heretics or to perish by starva-

tion.* The Crusaders now found themselves in possession of a conquered territory, small in extent, indeed, but likely to be enlarged, as no small portion of the neighbouring inhabitants were under the displeasure of the Church, and therefore to be treated as outlaws; and it appeared necessary to constitute some one liege Lord of the new domain. The Cross-bearing Barons, therefore, having met in council to deliberate on whom the honour and revenue should be bestowed, offered them to the Count of Nevers. But he refused their homage, as did the Duke of Burgundy. They must have shrunk with dread from a dignity on which the execration of millions was already poured, and from a responsibility which in itself implied the violation of humanity under the pretext of religion. The work of election was then confided to a committee, consisting of the Legate, two Bishops, and four Knights, who chose Simon, Count of Montfort, already distinguished by those martial qualities which, joined with inexorable bigotry, marked him as an efficient servant of the Roman See. Either from modesty or fear, he refused at first. The Legate and the Duke of Burgundy entreated him on bended knees to accept the gift; but when he still appeared to be irresolute, the Legate changed his posture, and commanded him, with pontifical authority, to undertake the charge. For a short time he was surrounded by the troops of his most powerful allies, and reigned at Carcassone as representative of Romanism for the suppression of dissent. Heretics were brought before him to receive sentence at his pleasure, and the faggots were instantly kindled at his word. At Castres, for example, two persons were set before him as convicted of disaffection to the Church, although the case of one was doubtful; but he commanded them both to be bound to the stake, observing of the one who denied the accusation, that if he were an honest man, the fire would expiate his sins, but if a liar, he would but suffer the penalty due to his imposture. Perhaps, however, the scene was prepared for the sake of effect; for matters were so managed that "the Catholic" escaped from the stake as soon as the flame began to rise. As he ran away the soldiers shouted, "A miracle!" and the other, as an undoubted heretic, was burnt to death.

About three weeks after the occupation of Carcassone, Hughes, Bishop of Riez, and Milon, Notary of the Pope, both accredited Legates, held a Council at Avignon, where about twenty-four Archbishops and Bishops, and a sufficient number of Abbots and other dignitaries, consulted on the affairs of the Church in France. The canons of that Council conveyed strict injunction on all Bishops to preach more frequently and with greater care, or at least to employ others to preach in their stead, if unable to occupy the pulpits with convenience, or, as we may be permitted to suspect, with credit. They were censured for having allowed heresy to spread by their negligence. Various regulations against Albigenses and other Christian Nonconformists, and against Jews, were there renewed. Immodest dances and lewd songs in churches were forbidden, showing that the charge of clerical negligence was not unfounded. The relatives of the

* Fleury, lxxvi., 36, 37, 44, 45; Llorente, cap. ii., art. 2, 3; Hallam, Europe during the Middle Ages, chap. i., part 1.

murderers of Pierre de Castelnau, and another Ecclesiastic who had met with a similar end, were excluded, down to the third generation, from every ecclesiastical benefice; the citizens of Toulouse were excommunicated because they had failed to expel all reputed heretics from their territory; and the Count himself, notwithstanding his submission and humiliation at St. Gilles, was threatened with excommunication if he should presume to recover some civil rights of which he had been divested. About the same time the Papacy found, or, at least, seemed to find, a new agency for the maintenance of its interests. A Spaniard, Durando of Huesca, and a few others, having cleared themselves from suspicion of heresy, went to Rome, and solicited the sanction of the Pope on a project for extending the doctrine of the Church of Rome in France. Aspiring, as they said, towards Christian perfection, they renounced the world, sold their property and distributed the price among the poor, lived in voluntary poverty, without caring for the morrow; refused alms in any other form than that of daily food or clothing; and, most of them being Priests, wished to devote themselves to study, preaching, and controversy with sectarians of all sorts, but always under direction of the Bishops. Innocent III. gladly accepted their proposal, and sanctioned their constitution into a fraternity, bearing the designation of "Poor Catholics," by two bulls, one addressed to the Bishop of Tarragona, and the other to Durando himself, and his poor brethren. For a time they spread rapidly, both in the south of France and in Italy, labouring hard to bring over the Albigenses, Waldenses, and others to their opinions; but either these opinions were from the first different, on some points, from those of Rome, or they became so by disputation with more enlightened persons; many Bishops complained against them to Innocent himself, who was reluctant to confess fallibility by cancelling his bulls within three months; but the experiment failed; and the priesthood learned by that failure to hold by the only tenable position, that their system could not be upheld by argument, but must be maintained by fire and sword. The additional apparatus of racks and dungeons was not yet quite ready; but the men were living who would prepare that also. Another society of relapsed Vaudois, or of persons holding opinions resembling theirs, yet in communion with the dominant Church, also came into existence in Italy, and fell into oblivion. We therefore close this digression concerning the Council and the Societies, and return to scenes where the ecclesiastical spirit of that age found freer scope and greater appearance of success in warring against the Gospel.

The persecuted Count of Toulouse, finding himself impoverished by the loss of tolls, and threatened with excommunication if he should proceed to enforce their payment, applied to the King for redress; but in vain, for the King would scarcely venture to offend the Pope. To the Pope himself, therefore, Raymond appealed in person; but was assailed with hard words, and required to purify himself canonically from suspicion of the murder of Peter of Castelnau, and of heresy. He then applied to the Emperor Otho for assistance against Simon de Montfort, who threatened to attack Toulouse; but he could obtain no

earthly succour. Meanwhile Simon de Montfort carried onward his hostilities against those places where heretics were in possession or found refuge. Together with the Abbot of Cîteaux and a Dr. Theodise, he laid siege to the castle of Minerbe; and when the besieged proposed to capitulate, consulted his clerical authorities before answering their proposal. Count Simon appealed to the Abbot, as chief of the whole enterprise: the Abbot was exceeding angry, for, being a Monk, it became him to compass the death of heretics, and heretics would be suffered to live if the castle were occupied by capitulation; yet, being a Monk, and Priest besides, not permitted so much as to let blood by a lancet, how could he, even as chief of that enterprise, openly direct what his heart longed for, a massacre of all the heretics? However, he granted their lives to all the inhabitants, heretics included, if they would conform to the Church; and comforted a zealous brother who objected to that condition through fear that most of them would conform, and the pleasure of killing them would be missed, by expressing his conviction that few conformists would be found. Nor was he mistaken; for when both he and the Count went from house to house to offer the heretics life on the condition prescribed, not one would sacrifice his conscience. "Why," said they, "do you preach to us? We want none of your religion. We reject the Roman Church. You labour in vain: we will not deny our faith for the fear of death, nor for the hope of life." There was no difficulty in finding those persons: they were assembled in their usual places of meeting, no doubt met together to encourage each other to prepare for entrance into the congregation of the blessed; not fewer than a hundred and forty of *the Perfect*, as they were called, were led out of the place; and, so far from recanting, or even offering resistance, many of them, without waiting for executioners, threw themselves upon a huge burning pile prepared for their martyrdom. Misled by the reports of persecutors, historians not unfrequently disparage the Albigenses, and concede to the slander that they were Manicheans. As well might the Moravians, or the earlier Methodists, be called Manicheans, on account of their men and women meeting in distinct companies on some occasions, as the confessors of Minerbe were found by Simon de Montfort and his Abbot. We recognise, not the asceticism of an unscriptural sect, but the calm devotedness of persons who lived in a communion distinct from the fallen Church of Rome, who were so esteemed by their fellow-citizens over an extensive tract of the French dominions, that they were protected and defended by armed resistance against the Crusaders, and who, for Christ's sake, counted not their lives dear to them. What language of evangelical confidence they uttered as Christian martyrs, it is impossible to say, because the only historians were their murderers or the abettors of their murder, and no conclusion unfavourable to their memory should be drawn from the absence of a distinct and honest narrative. During the siege of Minerbe, Raymond of Toulouse was endeavouring to persuade the Papal commissioners to allow him to purify himself, according to the Pope's order, from the suspicion of murder and heresy. But they

would not suffer him to do so; fearing that if the discredit cast on him by their own party should be removed, it would be impossible by any other pretext to keep up the flame of popular fanaticism in France, and bring Crusaders to extend the conquests of the Church. They therefore commanded him to expel the heretics forthwith from his country, and, after having done that, to apply again for the fulfilment of the Pope's orders. With tears he declared himself unable to expel the heretics, and was again excommunicated, together with all his abettors (A.D. 1210). A similar conference was shortly afterwards held at Narbonne, where Peter, King of Arragon, was present, but without any effect, it being the only object of the Priests to prolong the war, not only for the extirpation of heresy, but also for extending the temporal dominion of the Church. For the sake of prosecuting these objects, no method was rejected, however dishonourable in the sight of men, or wicked in the sight of God. Some peculiar opinions had found their way into the University of Paris. Amauri, (or Amalric,) who first gave them currency, had indeed recanted; but, as the recantation was known to be compulsory, died in disgrace, and his bones were dug up and burnt. Others perpetuated the opinions; and however erroneous some of them might have been, for we cannot easily ascertain how far they departed from the scriptural standard, it is certain that the anger of the priesthood was aroused by contempt of image-worship and of relics, denial of transubstantiation, neglect of the fathers of the church, and a declaration that Rome was Babylon, and the Pope Antichrist. To make out a strong case against the sect, it was necessary to collect unguarded expressions and opinions of individuals, for which purpose the Bishop of Paris employed one Raoul de Nemours as a spy; who, professing to be one of their number, obtained sufficient information of the kind required, and fourteen persons were duly examined, condemned, brought to Paris, delivered to the King to be dealt with according to his pleasure, and finally burnt alive. A few others were sentenced to perpetual imprisonment; and the writings of Aristotle, hitherto read in the University, were thenceforth prohibited, as tending to corrupt the faith. Whoever did not contribute, in some way, to the extirpation of heresy, was himself suspected. Bishops hastened to the seat of war, and signalized themselves in the work of fratricide. The Bishops of Chartres and Beauvais sat down with the troops before the castle of Thermes, and the Archdeacon of Paris, an excellent engineer in those days, directed the operations of the siege. The Bishop of Paris, with two other mitred brethren, enjoyed the siege of Lavaur, which was taken by assault under their eye: eighty of the principal inhabitants were brought out and killed by the sword, and about three hundred heretics burnt. By the hands of the pilgrims another company of sixty was put to death in a place called Casser, after the Bishops had in vain endeavoured to convert them, as they said, and the devotees were delighted to commit them to the flames (A.D. 1211). After several other lesser conquests, Simon led all his pilgrim army to besiege the city of Toulouse; and, being aided by an accession of Germans, who came to kill "the Beghards," he might have suc-

ceeded, if provisions had not failed, and he therefore gladly accepted an invitation brought by the Bishop of Cahors, to take possession of that place, which was ready to withdraw fealty from Raymond. The career of conquest was, however, checked by the return to their homes of a great part of his volunteers, who said that they had only vowed to fight for forty days, and by the revolt of several of the places taken. The Priests, on the contrary, had not so limited their vows. The Archbishop of Narbonne, as Legate, pressed the war with indefatigable diligence, scarcely allowing himself time enough for sleep or food, and a crowd of Prelates quitted their sees to wait upon him in the camp; yet the zeal of others for the Crusade to the Holy Land diverted the streams of fanaticism into another channel; the war against Albigenses languished, and would have utterly failed, if Louis, son of the King of France, had not crossed himself for that enterprise, and brought with him considerable reinforcements (A.D. 1213). Raymond, on his part, appealed to his brother-in-law, Peter of Arragon, for succour, representing the wrongs done to him by the Crusaders, and the injustice of the Priests, who would not allow him opportunity to clear away the stain of heresy. He placed his wife, Peter's sister, under the protection of the King of Arragon, with his son, and the territory yet remaining. Peter espoused his cause, and wrote to the Pope, saying that when the Crusaders, following the orders of His Holiness, had entered on the lands of the Viscount of Beziers, his vassal, he did not afford him due assistance, lest he should oppose the intentions of the Church, and that, consequently, the Viscount lost his lands, and at last his life. He complained that the Legate and Simon of Montfort had not only taken those places within his dominions which were occupied by heretics, but many others where the inhabitants were not under the least suspicion of heresy, and carried their usurpation so far that Montauban and Toulouse were the only places remaining to him. He said that, during his absence in a war with the Moors in Spain, they had seized the lands of the Counts of Foix and Comminges, and of the Viscount of Bearn, all three his vassals, although he was at that time giving his blood, and that of his subjects, for the faith; and he concluded by praying the Pope to preserve the county of Toulouse for the son of the Count, and promised that the youth, then fifteen years of age, should be educated with great care under his own direction. The Pope could scarcely disoblige a Sovereign who had been second to none in honouring the Roman See, and in persecuting nonconformists; and therefore directed his Legates to convene a Council of Clergy and laity, investigate the proposals of the King of Arragon, and send him their opinion in writing. He also commanded them to endeavour to put an end to the war in their legation, in order that nothing might divert Princes and people from fighting against the Saracens; and charged Simon of Montfort to render to the King the dues he had been accustomed to receive from the Viscount of Beziers, and restore to him and his vassals the lands that had been taken from them. Peter of Arragon went to Toulouse; a Council was at the same time assembled at Lavaur, and, after unsatisfactory negotiations

between him and them, they proclaimed a crusade against him for protecting heretics, and the war was resumed with as much vigour as the resources of the priestly party would allow. Encouraged by success in resisting their attacks, the King called more troops out of Spain, and proceeded to act offensively. Simon grew desperate, marched on him as he was besieging the castle of Muret, and gave him battle (A.D. 1213). Peter was left dead on the field; and so one of the most zealous champions of the Papacy, because he would not go into the excess of injustice of which Romish Ecclesiastics only could be capable, was confounded with those whom he had once thought it pious to destroy, and was slain by Ministers of the Church for which his blood, and the blood of his subjects, had been so freely shed. And this arose from the pertinacious resolution of those men to make every other consideration bend before this one,—the destruction of heretics for the enriching of the Church.

Their excessive zeal had outrun the better policy of the Pope, who would fain have retained the services of Peter of Arragon; and he therefore sent a new Legate into Provence with fresh instructions, to obviate, if possible, the mischief he foresaw as likely to recoil on his cause from the death, in the very bosom of heresy, of one of his best friends. The Legate arrived in the beginning of the year, (1214,) and brought many letters to the Clergy, and one to Simon de Montfort, requiring him to give up to the Papal representative the son of the King of Arragon, whom he had taken prisoner at the battle of Muret. The Legate was also empowered to absolve the Count of Comminges, the Viscount of Bearn, and the people of Toulouse, who were all under anathema. Political reasons only induced the Pope to make those concessions to the Princes; but with heretics no measures were to be kept. The Bishop of Carcassone had spent a year in preaching this Crusade in France, and returned to Provence about the middle of April, at the head of a formidable company of armed pilgrims; the Cardinal Legate at Paris, and the Archdeacon of Paris, already famous as an engineer and soldier, came at the same time with reinforcements; the united companies met at Beziers, now peopled with Catholics, and this army was further increased by the arrival of the Duke of Burgundy and the Archbishops of Lyons and Vienne, leading numerous trains of dependents and volunteers to help in holy war. The new Legate fulfilled his instructions by reconciling the Counts and other noblemen to the Church; but the Bishops, headed by Simon de Montfort, pursued their vocation of taking castles, robbing proprietors of their estates under the same pretext of religion, and burning the more eminent of the Waldenses as they fell into their hands. Seven such persons being brought to the Parisian Legate, freely acknowledged themselves to be followers of the Waldensian doctrine, and were given over to the Crusaders, who burnt them with great glee. But the suppression of heresy was not the only object contemplated by the Church. Visions of temporal grandeur, no doubt, rose to the imagination of Pope and Prelates, who began to look on the provinces of Provence and Languedoc as added to the states of the Church. The Kings of Arragon and France might be expected to

oppose a sudden annexation of the conquered country to the patrimony of St. Peter; and therefore the only question that could be safely discussed as yet was, who should be temporal ruler. To this end a Council was assembled at Montpellier, (A.D. 1215,) consisting chiefly of Ecclesiastics, with laymen enough to give the decision a colour of legality. Simon de Montfort, who aspired after the sovereignty, was not present in the assembly, because the inhabitants hated him so thoroughly that he durst not enter the city; but stayed in the neighbourhood, and met some of the Bishops daily at the house of the Knights Templars outside the walls. Business commenced in the form of a sermon delivered by the Legate in the church of Notre Dame, and proceeded in a meeting of the Bishops only, at his lodgings, where they consulted as to the person to whom the city of Toulouse, and the other places conquered by the Crusaders, should be given. Their choice fell on Simon; and he would probably have been invested with the honours of lordship at once, if it had not been found, on reference to the Legate's commission, that so much could not be done without the sanction of the Pope himself. An Archbishop was immediately despatched with letters to Rome to supplicate His Holiness to confirm their vote, and quickly returned with letters appointing Simon as Protector of the conquests made by the Crusaders, until a General Council, soon to assemble in the Lateran, should decide respecting the lordship. The Protector was exhorted to persevere in the service of Christ, and the Barons were instructed to obey him in all things relating to peace and faith; in a solemn assemblage of the principal personages present, he was inducted into the new dignity, and his first act was to proceed to Toulouse, attended by the pilgrims, and dismantle the city of its walls. Prince Louis, son of the King of France, took part in that expedition; but only as a servant of the Legate, who had forbidden him to take any step without his authority, because his royal father had not been sufficiently zealous in the holy war, nor extirpated all sinners from his realms, and because he came not as a Prince, but only as a pilgrim. The gentle Prince obeyed; and having fulfilled forty days, the period required by his vow, he returned to Paris, wiser than when he came. The expected fourth Council of Lateran was holden at the time appointed; and a concourse of four hundred Bishops of all grades, eight hundred Abbots and Priors, with proxies of many that could not be there in person, Ambassadors of both Emperors, and the Kings of England, France, Hungary, Jerusalem, and Cyprus, and of a multitude of lesser Princes, were all managed by the clever and imperious Pontiff, Innocent III. Raymond, Count of Toulouse, was there as a supplicant, imploring the Council to restore him the territory and power of which he had been deprived. Simon de Montfort also sent his messengers to solicit the title and prerogatives of Count of Toulouse; and although several Prelates, constrained by a sense of justice and humanity, favoured the suit of Raymond, the majority applauded Innocent when he haughtily gave sentence that Raymond, under whose government faith and peace had never been kept, should be for ever excluded from his possessions, and make his abode in

some suitable place, with a pension of four hundred marks of silver, to do penance until death. His wife, whose brother, Peter of Arragon, had fallen while fighting in his defence, should be permitted to retain her dowry, in consideration of her acknowledged orthodoxy. All the country that the Crusaders had conquered from the heretics should be given to the Count of Montfort, saving ecclesiastical privileges, of course, because he had laboured more than any one else in "the service of Christ." The rest of the country, as yet unconquered, should be preserved, under the orders of the Church, by persons able to maintain peace and faith, until the son of Raymond should be of age. This monstrous usurpation was not submitted to by the vassals of Count Raymond. Many of them revolted against Simon, and the country was involved in civil war, not only for religion, but for territorial rights; the Priests were treated, in many places, with every mark of contempt; and although crowds of vagrant Preachers came from various parts of France to earn, as they were told, plenary remission of their sins by endeavouring to convert heretics, the force of popular disgust was found to be insuperable. Avignon, Marseilles, St. Gilles, Beaucaire, and Tarascon renounced allegiance to Simon; and when a new Legate came from Rome, he was obliged to cross the Rhone, and lodge, as inoffensively as possible, in Orange (A.D. 1217). On the other hand, the new Pope, Honorius III., availing himself of the services of Dominic, urged the preaching Friars to give the people of France and Spain no rest, until the supremacy of the Church should be established. A new order, "the militia of Christ," was instituted; the members of which, living in their own houses, were to conduct the business of domestic persecution; * and another order of women, as a branch of the Dominicans, was charged, by sedulity of devout and earnest speech, to quicken the zeal of men in the prosecution of the same object. Raymond, who had retired to Spain, encouraged by the position of affairs in his own country, returned secretly to Toulouse, and was welcomed by the inhabitants: Simon was perplexed, the Legate was desperate, the Pope wrote letters to the Kings of France and Arragon, exhorting them to take up arms on his behalf, and even threatened the latter with a foreign invasion if he would not consent. It does not appear that any very large number of Crusaders was obtained by this means, for people had spent nearly all their zeal, and the Papal Count sat down nine months before the rebuilt walls of Toulouse without being able to take the city. Between the sallies of the besieged, and the reproaches of the Legate, who taunted him with incapacity and negligence, Simon's spirit sank; in that state he was when killed by a stone from an engine, and he left his son to inherit an empty title. The young man spent a month in fruitless attempts to take the city, and then abandoned it to its rightful Lord (A.D. 1218). Provisions failed, money was exhausted, pilgrims deserted the camp, and many of the people of the country, hearing that Simon, whose valour had commanded respect, was dead, refused to acknowledge his son Amauri. During about seven years the war continued between this second

* Hence came the "Familiars" of the Inquisition.

Count of Toulouse, so called, and the real Count Raymond, and his son and successor, Raymond VII. At last the Pope contrived to engage the influence of the Emperor and the King of France to induce Raymond to solicit or accept reconciliation with the Church. The ceremony was performed at Paris; where the Legate, Conrad, declared him to be a Catholic, and pronounced the Crusade against the Albigenses at an end. A Council was then convened at Montpellier; the Prelates condescended to restore him his earldom; and he engaged to keep the Catholic faith as taught by the Roman Church, to enforce the same observance on all his vassals, and to purify his lands from heresy by executing the judgment of the Church on heretics by fines and corporal punishment (A.D. 1224).

All this, and much besides, was more easily promised than performed. The faith and peace of the Roman Church could not be kept in Narbonese Gaul. After so much suffering, with the remembrance of innumerable injuries, and with a confirmed hatred of the whole system of Popery, the people were not likely to submit to the sway of priestcraft in mere compliance with the negotiation of Raymond the younger, who could not bring the towns to submission, and was therefore, like his father, treated as an enemy of the Church. In a national Council at Paris, (A.D. 1226,) the Legate excommunicated him, and confirmed, as he pretended, the right of Louis VIII., King of France, and his heirs, to the lands held by the Count of Toulouse, a condemned heretic. Amauri, unable to govern the towns conquered by his father, surrendered them to the King, who received the Cross from the Pope's representative, and vowed to exterminate heresy in his new dominions. Again Preachers were sent forth to stir up the French to fight for their religion; the Clergy engaged to give the King a subsidy for the maintenance of his troops; all who owed him military service were commanded to appear at Bourges on an appointed day, and eventually marched thence, with Louis at their head, and met with no resistance until they reached Avignon, which stood a long siege. At last, hunger and disease compelled the inhabitants to capitulate; and the Crusaders, after seeing two thousand of their companions perish with sickness under the walls of Avignon, gladly struck their tents. The war thus ended, Louis died shortly afterwards; and a Council at Narbonne made various enactments for the punishment of heretics, and offered the persons and the goods of the Counts of Toulouse and Foix, the Viscount of Beziers and the Albigenses, to any who could take them (A.D. 1227). Still the conquest was incomplete, and Raymond did not make final submission until two years later, when he appeared before the King at Paris, and was permitted to retain his lands for life; but they were to be transferred after that to the King and his heirs, and he was to do penance by five years' service in the wars against the Saracens beyond sea, and contribute four thousand marks of silver for the establishment of a University in Toulouse. That city was relieved from interdict; and a Council was shortly afterwards held there, (A.D. 1229,) which is marked as exerting great influence in the subsequent proceedings of the priesthood. The Archbishops and Bishops were to swear in one

Priest, and two or three laymen at least, in every parish, both in and out of cities, who should diligently, faithfully, and frequently seek out heretics by searching all houses and other places that might lie under suspicion, and giving notice of such places to the Bishop, the Lord of the place, or his Bailiff. The Lords were also to be careful to have search made for heretics in villages, houses, and woods; and if any one should be convicted of having sheltered a heretic for money, or otherwise allowed him to remain on his land, he should lose that land, and his person should be delivered to his Lord to suffer justice. The Bailiff that should neglect to search for heretics in his neighbourhood should lose his property, and never be Bailiff again. The house in which a heretic was found should be pulled down, and the site confiscated. Any one might hunt heretics in any place, and the Bailiff of that place should be bound to render assistance. Those who had voluntarily abandoned heresy should not reside any longer in the town where they had previously dwelt, if that town was suspected of heresy; and, to mark detestation of their ancient error, they should wear two conspicuous crosses of a different colour from their garments, and not be allowed to discontinue the mark without letters testimonial from the Bishop. Neither should they be intrusted with any public office, nor admitted in any matters of law, until they had been restored to unity by the Pope or his Legate. Heretics converted through fear of death, or from any other cause, and not voluntarily, should be imprisoned by the Bishop, notwithstanding their conversion, so that they might not corrupt any one. They were to be maintained in prison by those who had got their property, or, if they had no property, by the Bishop. A list of all the inhabitants was to be kept in every parish; and all males at the age of fourteen years, and all females at twelve, should swear before the Bishop or his delegates to renounce all heresy, hold the Catholic faith, and persecute and denounce heretics. Every one should communicate at Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide, or be suspected of heresy. "We also prohibit that the laity should be permitted to have books of the Old and New Testament, unless any one should desire to have a Psalter, or a Breviary for the Divine Offices, or the Hours of the blessed Virgin, for the sake of devotion. *But they must not have any of the aforesaid books translated into a vulgar language.*" Whoever should be defamed or suspected of heresy, might not exercise the profession of a Physician; and when any sick person should have received the host from the hand of a Priest, he was to be carefully looked after until the time of his death or recovery, lest any heretic, or person suspected of heresy, should get access to him, as enormous evils had happened in consequence of such interviews. Wills were to be made in the presence of a Priest, or be invalid. All heads of families were to attend church, and hear the entire service and sermon on Sundays and fast-days, except prevented by some sufficient cause, or be fined twelve *tournois* pence, half to the Lord of the land, and half to the poor. Many of these regulations will be recognised as afterwards continued by the Inquisition; and the prohibition of the holy Scripture in vernacular

languages, is remarkable as the first officially published by any part of the Church of Rome, but afterwards adopted by the whole. The universal adoption and subsequent relaxation of this rule will be related as the events arise. And it will occur to the reader that the canons of the Council of Toulouse are only an enlargement of those of Lateran III. and Verona.*

When Toulouse became a University-town, and an appanage of France, it was also a stronghold of ecclesiastical power, the Albigenses were no longer in a condition to defend themselves by taking up arms, nor was it necessary to wage war against them, or to preach crusade. A system was organized for the suppression of religious liberty, not only in those provinces, but over a great part of Europe; and we only read of the followers of Waldo and other nonconformists throughout the remainder of the thirteenth century as helpless sufferers of a searching and ruthless persecution more malignant, and unspeakably more artful, than that inflicted by the Pagans on the early Christians. Councils at Melun, Beziers, (A.D. 1233,) and Arles, (A.D. 1234,) followed up the determinations of Toulouse, adding some stringent regulations which the Priests thought necessary, in order to arm themselves and their familiars with more ample power to vex and to destroy. The same thing was done in Spain and Italy; but we must continue to trace the rise of the Inquisition in Languedoc and Provence. There, as elsewhere, the Dominicans were the chosen instruments for its establishment; and the Bishops were strictly required to aid, but by no means to direct, them in all their operations. Yet some deference was necessarily rendered to the Bishops to obviate or to appease their jealousy; and accordingly the arrangements for the first or ancient Inquisition were all made in Councils. The three Archbishops of Narbonne, Arles, and Aix, with many other Ecclesiastics, being assembled at Narbonne, were consulted by the Friars, who received, not direction, but advice, to the following effect:—"We advise you to impose the following penance on those heretics whom you may have exempted from imprisonment, because they came to you of their own accord within the appointed time, and declared to you the truth, as well against others as themselves. Let them come to church every Sunday, wearing the Cross on their dress, and present themselves to the Curate between the Epistle and the Gospel, carrying rods in their hands with which they shall receive discipline, and they shall suffer the same in every procession. On the first Sunday of each month let them visit, with the rods in their hands, all the houses in the town where they have formerly seen heretics. Let them be present every Sunday at mass, vespers, and sermon. Let them bear arms, at their own expense, for the defence of the faith and of the Church against Saracens, heretics, or other rebels, during an appointed time, as the Pope may command; but let them not be required any more to go beyond sea, lest they should rally together there, and pervert the Catholics. The Inquisitors may add to, or

* Fleury, lxxvii.—lxxix; Allix, Albigenses, xxi.; Mariana, Hist. de Espana, xii., 2; Llorente, Hist. de la Inquisicion, ii., 4, 5; Maitland, Albigenses and Waldenses, sect. vii.

diminish from, those periods of penance, according to circumstances, and the parish Priests shall see that the penance be performed. The heretics who shall not have presented themselves within the time of grace, or who shall in any other way have rendered themselves unworthy of indulgence, and yet submit to the Church, ought to be imprisoned for life; *but as the number is so great that it is impossible to build prisons for them*, you might defer imprisonment until the Pope has been consulted. As for the rebels that refuse to obey, whether to submit to imprisonment or any other penance, you should abandon them to the secular Judge without hearing them any more, and treat them in the same manner as the relapsed after abjuration. It is enough that they have deceived the Church once." They also advised the Dominicans not to allow any one who had been subject to discipline on account of heresy to turn Monk, lest he should corrupt the simple Monks; and not to let any one be exempted from imprisonment on any account, not the husband for the sake of his wife, nor the wife for the sake of her husband, nor fathers nor mothers for the sake of their children, nor others on account of old age or infirmity. "No one," they said, "should be condemned without proof, or on his own confession; for it were better to leave crime unpunished, than to condemn the innocent." Here is a faint gleam of justice, or perhaps, to speak more truly, a simulation of justice, in the absence of common humanity; and while we peruse the above sentences, replete with artifice and cruelty, it is impossible to forget that the framers of these and other rules already cited were not the Inquisitors themselves, but Bishops, Abbots, parochial Priests, and Monks in Council assembled, often with Popes and Legates *a latere* at their head, resistlessly disproving the empty excuse of those who say that the Inquisition is not the Church, and that therefore the Church has not been responsible for its atrocities, but may disclaim them as acts of an independent institution.

Fulminations against heresy resounded from the centre, throughout the whole area of Popedom. Gregory IX. and Innocent IV. issued Bulls and Briefs to give uniformity to persecution, and impart one directive spirit to all its agents, adding to the unbloody sacrifice on the altars immolation at the stake, not as a rare act of zeal, but as an appointed solemnity. In France, of which country we are now speaking, no time was lost in obeying the sanguinary mandates; and one instance must serve, out of many, to illustrate the progress of the system. At the town of Montheme, in Champagne, a company of Albigenses was detected and proceeded against canonically. Handed over to the secular authority, they were reserved for execution on a convenient day. On the Friday before Whitsuntide, (May 13th, 1239,) when the improved state of the roads, and beauty of the vernal landscape, invited citizens and Barons to quit their workshops and their castles, and enjoy the country, a multitude of not fewer than a hundred thousand persons was gathered from all parts to the neighbourhood of that town, there to witness the vengeance of the Church. The Archbishop of Rheims, a large company of Bishops, and all the Ecclesiastics of every degree in the district, encircled the

hearths. At their head the King of Navarre, attended by a long train of Barons, gave royal sanction, and added to the attractions of the spectacle. One hundred and eighty-three victims were consumed in their presence, and the Monk who recorded the event pronounces that it was a holocaust agreeable to God. One Friar Robert is said to have been the active person in detecting and burning them, himself formerly one of the Bulgarians, as those people were sometimes called. At that time he was in favour as a successful Inquisitor; but carried his ferocity so far as to displease his employers, who found that he was persecuting as many as he could lay hands on, not for conservation of the faith, but in order to make himself feared, or to extort money. He was at last convicted of many crimes, and condemned to perpetual imprisonment. But the Inquisitors were frequently resisted; many of them in several countries lost their lives in endeavouring to establish the tribunal; and in Toulouse, during an interval of political change, the inhabitants rose on them, and put them to death; and eleven Dominicans, Franciscans, and Clerks, were instantly added to the catalogue of martyrs on the intelligence of their death reaching Rome, in consideration, it was said, of the holiness of the cause for which they suffered * (A.D. 1242). Councils were holden at Beziers and Alby, for the sake of keeping alive inquisitorial discipline; and Louis the Saint, the Popes, and the Prelates gave the entire weight of their respective dignities to the same cause; but a recitation of their doings would add nothing varied to that delineation of Romish intolerance in France during the thirteenth century which has been already given. Yet Councils and armies, Popes and Kings, could not prevail against the word of God; and, despite the prohibition of vernacular versions by the Council of Toulouse in the year 1229, a Canon of Aire laboured for about two years and eight months on a translation of the Old and New Testaments, interspersed with the glosses and postils of Peter Comestor: this work was republished in the dialects of Picardy and the Walloons, and copies are said to be still extant in the libraries of France. About the same time, (A.D. 1291 to 1294,) or shortly afterwards, another French version, but without note or comment, was also published; and if it originated, as Le Long conjectures, in an order of Louis IX., one of the most devoted supporters that ever led crusade in the service of the Roman See, the work may fairly be regarded as a practical disavowal of that part of the policy of Romanism. This view might seem incompatible with the entire current of history, if we were not to remember that Toulouse was a feud of the King of Arragon; and that therefore the Sovereigns of France were not required to abide by its decisions. And the disapprobation excited by ecclesiastical proscription of the sacred Scriptures was further expressed in Spain. James I. of Arragon had followed up the Council of Toulouse by presiding at another in Tarragona, (A.D. 1233,) and issuing a constitution to the following effect:—"In the name of the holy and indivisible Trinity, who holds the world in his fist, commands the commanders, and rules over the rulers, &c., &c. By an irrefragable decree, we determine

* Fleury, lxxxi., 29, 54.

and firmly inhibit that it shall not be lawful for any lay person to dispute publicly or privately concerning the Catholic faith; and whoso shall do the contrary, it being proved, shall be excommunicated by his Bishop, and, unless he shall purify himself, shall be had as one suspected of heresy. It is also appointed that no one shall have books of the Old or New Testament in Romance. And if any one has them, he must deliver them to the Bishop within eight days after the publication of this constitution, made at the time of the sentence, in order that they may be burnt." But as the sentences of these Arragonian Councils were neglected in France, so were they on the other side the Pyrenees, in Castile, where Alonso X., surnamed the Wise, afterwards commanded a version to be made of the canonical books; * (A.D. 1269;) a proceeding which the Jesuit Mariana endeavours to account for by the well-known desire of Alonso to polish and improve the Spanish language. But this was done in many other ways; and considering that dissidents from the Church of Rome had been the first translators of the Bible, that their work had been again and again denounced as heretical and dangerous, and that every Sovereign in Europe who did not aid in the suppression of religious liberty was exposed to the utmost peril of losing his kingdom, if not his life, it is impossible to read of translations of the Scriptures made by order of French and Spanish Kings, and of their reproduction in provincial dialects, without discerning the hand of God, who would not allow the last morsel of the bread of life to be snatched from the lips of his children, already perishing for lack of knowledge.

Having passed from France into Spain, we may pause for a moment to observe the conduct of the Popes there towards those who differed from them. It is certain that the Spanish priesthood and people had not yet imbibed the spirit of intolerance prevalent elsewhere. Although the kingdom of Arragon was politically Spanish, as the scene of persecution was chiefly in Languedoc and Provence, north of the Pyrenees, it would have perplexed the reader to have spoken of it as taking place elsewhere than in France. A great part of the thirteenth century was occupied in reconquering from the Saracens all the principalities of the Peninsula except Granada. But the court of Rome quarrelled with Don Pedro, King of Arragon, whose dominion comprehended Catalonia, Arragon, and Valencia, the King of Majorca, his brother, also doing him homage for Narbonne. Sicily was added to his dominions by conquest, to the grief of the Pope, who claimed that island for himself. He therefore excommunicated Pedro, and offered his kingdom to the French King, Philip, who, by taking the Cross for holy war against his neighbour, and daring to invade Spain, (A.D. 1285,) earned the surname of "Bold," but nothing more. The whole affair is one of secular politics; but the conduct of the Pope and his Legates in France was so infamous for suggestion and prosecution of treasonable intrigues and perjuries, for sanction and instigation of the utmost outrages of barbarian warfare on a defenceless people, and their brave, and ultimately victorious,

* Villanueva, De la Leccion de la sagrada Escritura en Lenguas vulgares, cap. i.

Monarch, that, if space allowed, a distinct narration might afford a perfect example of those political wars which were frequently waged under the standard of the Church, for the purpose of promoting designs of aggrandizement, and, if successful, would have gone far to realize the idea of the Pontiffs, that the world should acknowledge them as its liege Lords. It can hardly be necessary to state that the uniform accompaniment of a promise of eternal salvation to the licentious army was not forgotten, and that the profaners of churches, and violators of humanity, were blessed by the irritated Pope as worthy to be occupants of Paradise.* The King of Arragon was called a heretic, and not absolved until his last moments; but, although his kingdom was placed under interdict, the Clergy disobeyed the Pope, and proceeded with their ceremonies as usual. Other interdicts in Spain and Portugal were repeatedly enforced; and whenever the High Priest of Rome was angry, the churches were shut up, the bells hung silent, the altars were unvisited, the dead often lay unburied, except by trembling relatives of the departed, all religious observances were suspended, and prayer itself was declared unlawful. When people became throughly terrified by the denial of what seemed necessary for present comfort and eternal salvation, they usually withdrew obedience from their rulers, and compelled them to make fatal submissions to the Roman tyrant. The Inquisition was by this time nominally established in Spain; but, with the exception already marked, made little progress. But persecution was unrelenting; and when the Inquisition had overcome the open resistance of the people, and nearly silenced every expression of dissent from the dominant religion, the King, James II., commanded that all heretics, of whatever sect, should quit his dominions; (A.D. 1292;) and ordered the Justices to render full assistance to the Dominican Friars in character of Papal Inquisitors, to imprison whomsoever they might desire, to execute all their sentences, to remove every obstacle that hindered the free exercise of their office, and to furnish them with lodgings, horses, and provisions when on their inquisitorial journeys. Alonso II. had published a similar edict in 1194, and thus began the practice of expulsion which is still carried out to the extreme injury of that country.†

Some remaining zeal for the extension of Christianity deserves honourable mention. St. Francis, who has not been mentioned sooner, because not guilty of persecution, like Dominic, his contemporary, sent a party of six Missionaries from Spain to Mo-

* Every word of this statement is borne out by an eye-witness. Bernardo Desclot, Historia de sus Tiempos. Libro iii. reimpreso en Madrid, 1793.

† Llorente, iii., 1. The writer of this chapter possesses documents in proof. One is an officially-published decree of the Queen of Spain, the other an order of the chief authority of one of the cities of Spain, countersigned by his own hand, for the expulsion of Wesleyan Methodists, as such. These documents were issued in the years 1839 and 1840, and therefore are sufficient to support the assertion that the practice of expulsion is continued; although the change which has latterly taken place in the policy of continental legislatures, and in the general opinion of continental Europe, in respect to religious liberty, as well as the constant advance of better political principles in Spain itself, warrants the hope that Alonso II. of Arragon, and Christina of Spain, will have been the first and the last Sovereigns so to fight against God, and bring dishonour on the inhabitants of that peninsula.

rocco. Zeal for the Church was more conspicuous than meekness or love for souls in their discharge of the mission. They mistook invective for fidelity, and after having been allowed so to preach for some time, they were sent out of the country; but returned, resumed the same mistaken method of denouncing Mohammedanism, rather than preaching Christ; and five of the six were put to death, one having died before the party sailed from Portugal. They have since been canonized. Seven other Spaniards went to the little island of Ceuta, entered the town early one morning, contrary to a prohibition which excluded all Christians, walked through the streets with ashes on their heads, crying that none could be saved without faith in Christ. They were soon seized, and, having refused to renounce Christianity, were instantly beheaded.* An order, or fraternity, for the redemption of captives from the Moors, and styled "the Order of Mercy," was instituted with great solemnity, and greater superstition, at Barcelona (A.D. 1224). The object was admirable, but does not seem to have been attained. Christian slaves and renegades multiplied in Africa; but the brethren of the order also multiplied in Spain, and by their zeal accelerated the downfal of the Caliphs of Cordova.†

Great stir was frequently made in Italy about heresy, dissatisfaction with the Papal government was general, and many persons were treated as heretics; but it is not easy to discover traces of Christian martyrdom, although it is more than probable that many of the Vaudois would have been distinguished as witnesses of Gospel truth, had any record of their confession and suffering been preserved. It is enough to know that the Inquisition was fully established.

Conrad of Marpurg, a Dominican Monk, was first Inquisitor in Germany, where, indulging in the barbarous habits of the people rather than conforming to the milder professions of his Church, he examined persons accused of heresy by the ordeal of red-hot iron. As they were not likely to understand the means employed by Monks for enduring fiery trials without injury, they were, of course, convicted, and perished accordingly, at least as to their bodies, while Conrad was spared the trouble of distinguishing between tenets orthodox and heterodox. The Emperor, Frederic II., who was then on good terms with the Pope, having been invited to the imperial throne from which an excommunication had hurled his predecessor, Otho, as an enemy of the Church, confirmed the Inquisitors in plenary authority, (A.D. 1225,) by a famous decree, containing the usual enactments, and inflicting death on heretics, and infamy on their survivers and descendants.‡ Meanwhile the Pagans of Livonia, and those of Prussia, who are charged with licentiousness resembling that of Paris, especially in the habitual criminalities of prostitution and infanticide, combined with the ferocity that is found among savages in general, were invaded by Crusaders to whom heaven was promised after they should have washed away their sins in pagan blood. The indefatigable Dr. Conrad discovered a people on the banks of the Weser, who did not acknowledge the supremacy of Rome, but lived

* Fleury, lxxviii., 25, 44. † Mariana, Hist. Esp., xii., 8.
‡ Limborch, Hist. Inquisition, book I., chap. 12.

in perfect ecclesiastical independence. According to the Monkish annalists, they were exceedingly wicked. Their deepest guilt seems to have lain in a refusal to pay tithes, and an excommunication marked them as fit objects of hostility; attacked by their neighbours, they bravely defended themselves, and generally had the advantage; it became necessary to proclaim a crusade against them, and the Archbishop of Bremen, supported by the Duke of Brabant, and the Count of Holland, led a little army of Cross-bearers into the accursed province. The Stadings, for so they were called, gave battle with their accustomed courage; but the invaders were too strong for them. The Count charged vigorously, while the Clergy, at a convenient distance, chanted hymns, the martial music of their Church; the heretics were soon transfixed by consecrated swords; and, trampled under the horses' hoofs, six thousand fell in one day; many were dispersed, preferring expatriation to bondage, although liberty was no more to be found wherever they might go, and the remnant are said to have submitted to the Prelate * (A.D. 1234). The history of Germany and the empire during the former part of this century is full of the quarrel between the same Frederic, who mounted the throne under the patronage of the Pope, and the Popes themselves, Gregory and Innocent. His services were forgotten as soon as he displayed a disposition to resist encroachments on his imperial rights; and, like his predecessor, he was anathematized. His party, the Ghibellines, or Imperialists, in perpetual hostility with the Guelphs, or Papists, long divided Germany and Italy; and he might have triumphed, together with the cause of civil liberty, but for the extreme ignorance of the people, who heard him described by their Priests as a monster of iniquity. In a Council at Lyons, holden under Innocent IV., (A.D. 1245,) he was finally excommunicated by the Pontiff himself with the utmost solemnity; many of his subjects refused allegiance, and he died oppressed with grief. On this excommunication an author of high authority observes, that it is "the most pompous act of usurpation in all the records of the Church of Rome; and the tacit approbation of a General Council seemed to incorporate the pretended right of deposing Kings, which might have passed as a mad vaunt of Gregory VII. and his successors, with the established faith of Christendom."† Bulgaria, Hungary, and Poland were ravaged by crusading Bishops. So were the Netherlands. Indeed, all Europe was overrun with Crusaders and Inquisitors; and if there be a province not mentioned as the seat of religious war or inquisition, we may suppose the silence to indicate the poverty of history, rather than any happy exemption from the universal scourge.

England in the thirteenth century affords no materials for our history. Scarcely is a voice raised to witness for the truth; or, if there were such witnesses, their names are shrouded under the darkness of that age. The principal event, an unequal contest of King John with the Pope, related to regal rights, not to the interests of Christian doctrine, belongs to another class of history, and cannot be adequately related

* Fleury, lxxx., 24, 43; Moreri, s. v.

† Hallam, Europe during the Middle Ages, chap. iii., part 1.

here ; but sources of information in our own language are easily accessible. The independence of Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln, is admirable, yet not singular. Scotland and Ireland are passing under the Papal yoke, and a few Irish suffer for sorcery and witchcraft ; but as yet there are no Christian martyrs. The pride and cupidity of Rome have reached their highest point, and the year 1300 is marked in the capital of the Popedom as the year of Jubilee. The notion of a great festivity, solemnized at the expiration of each fifty or hundred years might have been suggested by recollection of such an institution in the law of Moses, or of the secular games *(ludi sæculares)* of the ancient Romans. The object was to bring pilgrims to Rome, whose offerings should enrich the priesthood. The pretext was one of custom : there was no credible testimony by which that pretext could be established ; but the cupidity of Pope and Clergy, the willingness of the Roman population to make gain of the multitudes of devotees who might be expected to crowd into their city, the passion of the populace everywhere for spectacle, and the willingness of a numerous class to make a safe pilgrimage to Rome, instead of hazarding their lives in a perilous "passage" to the Holy Land, combined to move the idle and superstitious gentry of that age in a new direction, and tended, under the good providence of God, to make the reigning vices of the Papacy yet more generally conspicuous, and provoke the salutary re-action which followed, and in no country more vigorously than in England. Fifty years afterwards, the lucrative experiment was repeated with yet greater splendour and success : subsequently, it was overdone by reducing the jubilee period, for the second time, to twenty-five years, and devout pilgrimages to Rome may be now pronounced as ended.

The Romish Church had risen to the utmost elevation over the temporal sovereignties and lesser States within its boundary. There were no longer any bodies of independent Clergy. Heresy, so called, was not extinguished ; but it was driven deeper beneath the surface of society, and one might pass through the provinces recently subdued by the Crusaders, without perceiving any trace of its existence ; just as the stranger would tread on the green turf covering the subterranean galleries of troglodytes, without supposing that a living and watchful population swarmed beneath his feet. The Grecian Patriarch, on the frontiers of the Popedom, barely retained the allegiance of a Clergy envious of the power of their western brethren, and ever trembling in the presence of Tartarian, Turkish, or Saracen invaders. Never did the Italian Antichrist boast greater things, indulge in greater confidence, or exercise so reckless provocation. An imperious Pontiff, and, if the charges of his enemies were not altogether unfounded, one that exceeded most of his predecessors in profligacy and impiety, carried those pretensions to the last extreme. This man, under the title of Boniface VIII., seemed to delight in pouring contempt on Princes, and especially on Philip the Fair, King of France, who had dared to resist his encroachment on regal power, as well as on the wealth and liberties of the kingdom. Surrounded by Priests who participated in the spoils of all churches and states out of Italy,

and who combined all their powers to resist the political claims of both the Emperor and the French King on their side the Alps, he professed to hold a Council at Rome, (A.D. 1302,) wherein every thought yielded subservience to his principles, and every voice re-echoed his commands. In that assemblage he produced a Bull *(Unam Sanctam)* expository of the doctrine which all the ultramontanes, and almost all other members of the priesthood, entertained, but did not always venture to put forth so undisguisedly. "We believe," recited the Council, speaking at his dictation, "We believe and confess one holy Catholic and apostolic Church, out of which there can be no salvation. We acknowledge her alone to be the Church, and as there is but one body, so is there only one head; for, having two heads, she would be a monster. This only head is Jesus Christ, with St. Peter his Vicar, and the successor of St. Peter. Whether they be Greeks, or whoever else, that say they are not subject to this successor, they must confess themselves to be part of the flock of Christ, who hath said that there is only one flock, and one shepherd. We learn that in this Church, and under her power, there are two swords, the spiritual and the temporal; but the former must be wielded by the hand of the Pontiff; the other by the Church, and by the hands of Kings and warriors following the order or the permission of the Pontiff. Let one sword be subject to the other, that is to say, the temporal power to the spiritual; for otherwise there could be no subordination to the higher powers, according to the command of St. Paul. Following the testimony of truth, the spiritual power should institute and judge the temporal; and thus is fulfilled, in the Church, the prophecy of Jeremiah: 'I have set thee over the nations, and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.' Therefore, if the temporal power do err, it must be judged by the spiritual, or if a lesser spiritual power offends, it must be judged by the greater; but it is God alone who judges the sovereign spiritual power, since the Apostle says, 'He that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.' Then 'whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God,' and sets up two principles, as did Manes, a doctrine which we judge to be false and heretical. And we farther declare and define that it is absolutely necessary to salvation that every human creature be subject to the Pope." * The Pope did not, indeed, mention Philip, but he published a claim of superiority over all Princes, a superiority that all should acknowledge, by granting to his priesthood absolute emancipation from temporal control, licence for perpetration of all crimes, without fear of punishment, or even recognition of any tribunal on earth, except that of Boniface or his representative. There should be a universal revolt of the most influential part of every population, and the Magistrate was everywhere to be controlled and even punished by the Priest. The French King grasped his sword, resolved to try its temper with the sword of Boniface, and burnt copies of the Bull at Paris in sight of the people, who were soon made to understand who handled the more potent weapon.

* Extravagantes communes, lib. i., tit. De Majoritate et Obedientiâ.

Nogaret, a French Lawyer, espoused the cause of his royal master and of his country; and, as if commissioned of God to wrest power from the pretended successor of Peter, the undaunted opponent of the foreign tyrant went to Italy, made common cause with the family of the Colonne, then suffering persecution in consequence of their adherence to the imperial party, or Ghibellines, attacked the Pope at a time when, not apprehending any danger, he had gone without guards to the town of Anagni, and there treated him with such violence that he died soon afterwards. So did he perish by the very sword which he had claimed the right to use for the death either of rebel or saint. The terrible retribution did not finish there. His successor was promptly, perhaps hastily, elected by the conclave, and took the name of Benedict XI. He seems to have paid too little deference to the wishes of the Cardinals, and to have provoked the jealousy of the secular Clergy by patronizing the Mendicant Friars at their expense. The pontificate of Benedict was therefore very short. One day as he was sitting at dinner at Perugia, where he sometimes resided, a boy, disguised as a woman, was introduced into his apartment. He assumed the character of *conversa*, or servant of a nunnery, and presented a silver basin full of confectionary as a present from the Abbess, a devoted admirer of the Pontiff. The fatal present was accepted without suspicion, the pretended nun was not required to taste first; but Benedict soon felt the effects of poison, and died a few days afterwards. With Boniface the French quarrel had not passed away, nor had the rancorous antipathy of the Guelph and Ghibelline factions abated in the least. These factions were represented and balanced in the conclave; but the ultramontanes were outwitted by a Cardinal in the French interest, who proposed a nomination of three persons, all of them known to be zealous advocates of every Italian claim, one to be elected after forty days. One of these was Archbishop of Bourdeaux, at that time in open opposition to his Sovereign, and therefore most unlikely to make him any concession unfavourable to the Papacy. But the wily Cardinal despatched couriers to Paris, proposing to Philip that he should represent to the Archbishop that his election to the Holy See depended on *his royal favour*, and negotiate with him in order to a good understanding for the future. The King welcomed the proposal, and desired the Archbishop to meet him at a monastery in the heart of a forest, at night, and under cover of profoundest secrecy. Satisfied by the tenor of the royal letters that he might trust himself to so mysterious an interview, the Prelate proceeded thither at the appointed time; and, after reviewing the secret correspondence, threw himself at his feet, blessed him for the unexpected boon of the tiara, and professed his readiness to repay the gift by entire acquiescence in the King's desires. Philip raised up the man who was already his political convert, and so soon to be his spiritual Chief, kissed him, and demanded six favours. First. Perfect reconciliation with the Church, and pardon for whatever wrong he was presumed to have done to Boniface. Second. Communion then to be given to the King and his suite in sign of reconciliation. Third. All the tithes

of the kingdom during five years. Fourth. Annihilation of the memory of Boniface by the annulling of his acts. Fifth. The promotion of two nominees of the King to the dignity of Cardinal, in the first instance, and similar promotions as they might be desired afterwards. Sixth.—Here the King reserved the final condition to be declared at a proper time and place, leaving the expectant Archbishop in utter ignorance of the ulterior demand. But with the honours of the Popedom so near in prospect, he could not hesitate to place himself and it at the disposal of the King, and therefore used the precious moment for giving unqualified consent. Mass was instantly celebrated with great solemnity; and, as representatives of the two great parties which then divided Europe, they both at the altar professed reconciliation, swore fidelity to each other, and then parted: the King also having sworn to make him Pope; but taking with him his brother and two of his "nephews" as hostages, the obligation of an oath alone being notoriously insufficient to bind a Pope. Thus fell the Papal power and independence, after an almost uninterrupted series of triumphs and encroachments, during six centuries at least. Thus gave way that antichristian power which, in the name of Christ, had fought against the truth more cruelly than Nero; for there had been a *quinquennium Neronis*, a period of clemency and justice, even in the reign of that tyrant; but no such period can be found in the reign of Papal tyranny. Signal, indeed, was the retribution. On the ruins of a French dynasty the Bishop of Rome had reared his fabric of European power and territorial sovereignty; but here is a successor elect, of the third Boniface, at the feet of a successor of Charles Martel. The predecessors of this abject postulant for the triple crown had hurled interdicts and anathemas on France; but here, in France, and at the demand of the anathematized Monarch, lie abjured the enmity, the pride, the terrors of a long hostile Papacy. But observe the sequel. The intriguing Cardinal receives a satisfactory reply from King Philip, five days before the expiration of the stipulated time; Bertrand de Got, or D'Agost, is declared Pope; a *Te Deum* is chanted with unusual exultation by the Guelph Cardinals; Bertrand is visiting his diocess, seeming to be disengaged from every other care, when intelligence of the election reaches him; he returns to Bourdeaux, and commands the Cardinals to come from Rome to France to crown him. Startled at so unexpected a summons, they suspect that it is intended to transfer the chair of Peter beyond the Alps, yet cannot now prevent it; the Frenchman being Pope, crowned or uncrowned, matters nothing. The Kings of France and England, with other Princes, and a large concourse of Ecclesiastics, assembled in the church of St. Just, in Lyons, November 14th, 1305, and were met by the reluctant Cardinals, who placed the triple emblem of temporal and spiritual power on his head. The Italians misgave themselves; the French had triumphed; yet all saluted him as Clement V.; and every circumstance of the pageant was watched with superstitious anxiety. Perhaps it pleases God to overrule even trifling events in such times of ignorance, and thereby to divert the thoughts of the multitude into some new channel. So it was on that

day. After the ceremony the Pope mounted a charger that had been kept in waiting at the church-door. He wore the sacred crown, brought by a Chamberlain from Rome for the occasion, and glittering with jewels. A compact crowd of spectators filled every spot available, and covered every eminence. The procession moved slowly onward, on the way to the Pope's lodgings: the King of France first holding the bridle, then other Princes, walking on foot, took the same place in succession, ostensibly signifying that they did homage; but really, that they *led* the Pope. Passing near an old wall, covered with spectators, the whole mass gave way, and, as it fell, the Pope's horse shied. Not even Kings could save him. Unhorsed, his Holiness lay in the dust; the crown forsook his head, and by the shock lost a rich carbuncle, valued at six thousand florins. Portents, if such they were, did not end there; for when, on the festival of St. Clement, the new Pope had given a dinner to his friends, in an after-dinner quarrel among the servants several lives were lost; and the Pope's brother, becoming involved in the confusion, was also killed. Thus began what the Italians called "the captivity;" their visible head being removed from Italy to France, and enthroned at Avignon.* Then France, "eldest daughter of the Church," became prouder than ever of her so-called Catholicity. A realm, hallowed by the presence of the Vicar of Christ, was not to be desecrated by that of a people of whom, according to the flesh, Christ came: as the Pope had paid so high a price for his dignity, their expulsion might mitigate the bitterness of subsequent regret; and the royal purse, as it was enriched by a donative of tithes, and should soon, as Philip too hastily expected, receive the spoils of the Templars, might also have the earnings of the Jews. In pursuance of a secret order, almost every Jew or Jewess, old or young, was arrested on the same day. Scarcely one was known to have escaped. All their property was confiscated, except sufficient to pay expenses to the frontier or the sea-coast. A few avoided temporal ruin by submitting to baptism; and many perished with fatigue, hunger, and grief (A.D. 1306). Encouraged by the temporary revival of his influence in a kingdom which had so long been alienated from Rome, and stimulated by the presence of a noble Armenian at the court of Avignon, Clement seriously thought of renewing the Crusades to Palestine. Haython, of Armenia, was related to the King of that country, had sustained the dignity of Viceroy over a province, and risen into celebrity as a soldier; but, imbued with the spirit of that age, and following the example of some members of his family, had betaken himself to a monastery of white Canons, or Præmonstratenses, on the island of Cyprus, that "as he had fought for the world in his youth, he might spend the residue of his days in the service of God, leaving the pomps of this life," or, to speak more correctly, that he might take a *safer* way to fame. The royal Monk presented himself at Poitiers, where the Pope, the King, and a select but numerous company of Princes and Prelates were holding a conference on the political affairs of England and

* Fleury, xc., 32—35, 44, 49—52.

France, and on the reports got up for the crimination of the Templars. He exerted himself to awaken an interest in those personages for the conquest of the "perfidious Saracens," and the recovery of the holy sepulchre. Amidst that rudely brilliant circle he shone as an oracle on all oriental affairs; answered questions suggested by his enumeration of barbaric realms, heard of for the first time by most of those present; and his descriptions and counsels, as those of an eye-witness and actor on the distant scene, gave him an undisputed authority. He told of Cathay, or northern China, the greatest kingdom that could be found, filled with people and with boundless wealth, extending to the shores of an ocean as yet unseen by any traveller from the west; and comprehending islands that no man could number. It was the emporium of the most precious works of art and fruits of nature; and "although the men were of the most perspicacious genius, and skilful in all corporeal works and exercises, no notion of spiritual things could be found among them." He told of Tarsa, whence came, said he, the Kings who visited the infant Saviour at Bethlehem; and where traditions of Christ were mingled with the figments and insensate ceremonies of idolatry. He told of the wandering herdsmen of Turquistan, the robust husbandmen and fierce warriors of Chorasmia, devoid of letters, yet obedient to the Patriarch of Antioch, and "making the body of Christ after the manner of the Greeks." While his hearers shuddered at hearing of the perpetual frosts and desolate snowy steppes of the Caucasian regions, he refreshed them with pictures of Indian magnificence, in a land where the blessed Apostle Thomas had preached the faith of Christ, now lost. To the longing imagination of Philip he displayed the gems, and pearls, and gold, and spices, and drugs abounding on the Indian main, and in the Archipelago; with the rubies and sapphires of Ceylon. Persia, Media, Armenia, Georgia, the realm of the Chaldees, Mesopotamia, Turkey, and Syria, with their customs and their heresies, passed under his familiar review. He described the history and polity of the Saracens in general; but dwelt with most assiduous particularity on all that related to the Tartars, with whom he was most anxious that Christendom should form alliance for the general conquest of the "perfidious Saracens," from Cordova, even to Mecca. "Now," cried he, "is the acceptable time, now is the day of salvation. Now, indeed, is the very time acceptable, the time for imparting succour to the Holy Land, which hath so long lain ravaged by perfidious dogs. Now is the acceptable time, when the hearts of the faithful ought to be inflamed. Now to *the passage of the Holy Land.* Now let us recover the holy sepulchre of the Lord, fountain and source of our hope, out of the hands of his enemies." On this theme he descanted incessantly. The Pope commanded Salconi, a Secretary, to write down the sum of those communications from the lips of the accomplished stranger, together with his Counsels, as an old soldier and statesman; and the French manuscript, revised and authenticated in his presence, (A.D. 1307,) was immediately translated into the low Latin of that age, and is now one of the most valuable fragments of the medieval history of the eastern

world.* The disclosures and eloquence of Haython led to no immediate result; the crusading mania could not be revived; and the wanton pillage of Alexandria a few years afterwards, and a disastrous expedition to Smyrna, (A.D. 1344,) only brought greater dishonour on the Christian name. But whoever peruses the reports of the Mission in Tartary, perhaps the most ancient systematic Missionary undertaking of which the Church of Rome can boast, reports which were presented to Clement V. at the same time and place, by a person then returned from Cambalú, will be satisfied that, although the notion of crusading could not be suddenly relinquished, the zealous Armenian, and the bearer of intelligence from Montecorvino, founder of the Tartarian churches, did more happily for Missions what Peter the hermit had done for Crusades. And when, fourteen years afterwards, Sanuto the Venetian solicited an audience of the Pope John XXII., at Avignon, and presented him with "two books for the recovery and preservation of the Holy Land, one covered with red, and the other with yellow;" and also put into his hands charts and maps of the Mediterranean, Palestine, and Egypt, literature and geography began (A.D. 1321) to contribute towards the propagation of Christianity; and even warlike propagandists were constrained to seek for rational and humane methods of doing what Knights, carrying the Cross, as Haython said, on their shoulders and in their hearts, had never been able to effect. Let us pause, then, and admire the sovereignty of God, who, in the worst of times, gently deposits elements of intelligence and peace amidst prevailing turbulence, hate, and fraudulent political and papistical intrigue. The books and charts of Haython and Sanuto were the earliest contributions to that immense Missionary library which comprehends some of the mightiest achievements of human learning, and still affords indispensable assistance to the evangelists of the world. But we are lured away from the history of persecutions, this *via dolorosa*, over which fidelity to truth in an age of mistaken liberality requires us to continue our weary steps.

Thanks be to God, that as ages of Protestant martyrdom approach, the power that has persecuted saints during every stage of its existence, visibly declines. When Clement V. was crowned at Lyons, the "captivity" of the Popes began, and like that of Babylon, to which the writers of Italy compare it, lasted about seventy years. "The majority of the Cardinals was always French, and the Popes were uniformly of the same nation. Timidly dependent upon the court of France, they neglected the interests, and lost the affections, of Italy. Rome, forsaken by her Sovereign, nearly forgot her allegiance; what remained of Papal authority in the ecclesiastical territories was exercised by Cardinal Legates, little to the honour or advantage of the Holy See." † Neither was the policy of the new race of Popes and

* The title of this rare and precious little volume is, "Liber Historiarum Partium Orientis, sive Passagium Terræ Sanctæ, Haythono, Ordinis Præmonstratensis, Authore, Scriptus anno Redemptoris nostri, M.CCC. Haganoæ, per Johan., Sec. Anno M.D.XXIX." The true date of the work is in the preface, 1307.

† Hallam, Middle Ages, chap. vii., part 2.

Cardinals so independent and masterly as that of their Italian predecessors. The details of the suppression of the Red-Cross Knights, or Templars, by whomsoever written, can scarcely be read without indignation. Wicked as many of them no doubt were, they could hardly be worse than other bodies, although some of their sins might be gross and flagrant, and therefore more severely censured than the covert abominations of mendicants and hermits; and by throwing away those auxiliaries, for the sake of their possessions, Clement committed a mistake injurious to his successors, but beneficial to the world. John XXII. quarrelled with the Emperor Louis of Bavaria, and by his intemperance provoked Germany to a formal and legislative resistance which irrecoverably impaired the influence of the Pontiffs. The same error aroused England to effectual defence, of which our parliamentary statutes of the reign of Edward III. afford evidence. Poets, satirists, and Divines in Italy, resented the alienation of the supreme Pontiff from that classic land; but the pressure of his presence being removed, bold spirits arose with almost unrestrained freedom, to lash the venal courtiers of Avignon, and to disclose the enormities of Popery, religious and secular, by desperately rending the veil that covered both. The insatiate cupidity of the Avignon Popes also goaded the inferior Clergy into hostility all over Europe, and thereby weakened their loyalty, as we shall observe when speaking of Wycliffe, at the very time when an earnest and combined defence of their Roman master might have retarded, or even destroyed, the beginnings of reformation.* This "captivity" led to the schism of the Papacy, which was distinctly seen to be the beginning of its downfal.

Weary of the exactions and oppression of the Governors appointed over them by the Popes of Avignon, the Italian states, at that time under their temporal sovereignty, manifested a spirit of resistance. The Legates were driven out of some of the cities, officers of the pontifical government were killed by the populace, and the right of a foreigner to exercise regal power in Italy was denied. Florence, the greatest commercial city of that peninsula, headed a league against the Pope; a new banner, bearing the Latin word *Libertas*, floated over the battlements of the confederate places; and LIBERTY became the magic word wherewith the people clamorously answered to exorbitant demands of obedience and revenue, and aroused themselves to cast off the yoke. Gregory XI., then on the throne, tried the usual expedients of bulls and interdicts; but the indignant population treated them with scorn. Still there was a strong ecclesiastical party who contrived to sow strife in the municipalities, and strengthen some nobles who, in the style of those times, were familiarly called *tyrants*.† Foreign mercenary troops were also marched into the country to subdue the insurgents. Florentine merchants resident abroad were

* Hallam, chap. vii., part 2, with his authorities, will enable the student to investigate this highly interesting part of Papal history.

† The Italian *tiranno*, like the Greek *τύραννος*, was used in a mild acceptation, and signified, in the free states, "a leading man." Undefined power is always abused, and the word has again become odious in modern, as in ancient, Italy.

ruined; for Kings, especially the King of England, confiscated their property, every anathematized person being regarded as an outlaw. Traders ceased to carry their commodities to Florence, and to other places in the league, because it was thought sinful to buy or sell with any from whom the Beast had withdrawn the mark of his protection; and the Florentines found themselves entangled in a most unequal contest. But it fell to a woman to placate the fury of the contending parties, at least, for a time. Catherine, a native of Sienna, a nun, a sister of penance of the observance of St. Dominic, was the heroine of the day. She had not earned glory by any work of active charity, but by a daring mysticism, the more welcome to the multitude as it overshot the widest boundary of sense and reason. She acknowledged no other master than Christ himself; and perpetually related conversations with which she pretended to have been favoured by Him. During her ecstasies she addressed Him, and answered and put questions to her Lord, invisible, of course, to every other person. One day she exhibited a gold ring, enriched with a diamond and four pearls, which she said He had given her in the presence of his mother, and a train of saints, to signify a spiritual espousal. Her confessor doubted many of her tales; but his incredulity was silenced when, awaiting a reply to some expression of his mistrust, her severe countenance suddenly assumed new features; and as he saw her face change into that of a middle-aged man, furnished with a becoming beard, he confessed himself persuaded of the truth of those wonderful communications. This confessor, humbly participating in the reputation of his confitent, was deputed to go to Avignon first, and endeavour, by submissive approaches, to moderate the anger of the Pope. Then Catherine, invited from Sienna to Florence, and received with reverential solemnity by the Priors * of the city, was implored to intercede with the Holy Father. She undertook the mission, and appeared before Gregory to supplicate for clemency, or, if necessary, to use her authority as being a subject of supernatural revelation. The Florentines had promised to send a deputation who should receive her commands, which, however, they failed to do; but the Pope empowered her to negotiate for him, a message from the Romans invited him to return to the city of Peter, as they chose to call it, and Catherine employed her masculine eloquence on the same behalf. Influenced by various political reasons, the Pope removed to Rome, attended by the Cardinals, who foresaw and predicted evil in the change. From Pisa, where the party landed, to Rome, Gregory and his train proceeded amidst a succession of pageantries, but slowly, and under the incessant anxiety of negotiations with the states. The "eternal city" welcomed him with every expression of joy; and succeeding festivals were marked with the highest pontifical solemnity. The Veronica, that is to say, the kerchief of the holy face, was spread out on the altar of St. Peter; the Romans were glad, and might have fancied that the veritable features of the Saviour smiled upon them; but, in

* The democratic Magistrates of Florence were then called Priors, perhaps in imitation of the monastic style: afterwards the secular title *Signori*, "Lords," was given them in preference.

reality, those days were fatal to the Popedom. It now became *a question* whether the Pope and his court should be French or Italian. By a noiseless and secret contrivance, Philip the Fair had managed to retain the Pope in his neighbourhood merely, for Avignon was not then subject to the French crown; but now the return of that most important body, the court of Cardinals, was made with so much parade, and surrounded by so many circumstances of political importance, that it was impossible to deliver the Papacy out of the dilemma. While the Italian laity had been aggrieved by the misconduct of Papal governors, both Clergy and laity had seen with indignation the honours and influence of the Pontificate monopolized by foreigners, and only awaited the demise of Gregory for attempting to recover the alienated right. That event soon took place (A.D. 1378). The majority of the Cardinals, however, on whom devolved the election of a successor, had no sympathy with the Italians. Of eighteen Cardinals then in Rome, only four were natives of the country; one was a Spaniard, thirteen were Frenchmen. No sooner were they shut up in conclave, than the Romans, reasonably apprehending that a Frenchman would be chosen, and fearing that the Holy See would be returned to Avignon, assembled tumultuously, took arms, surrounded the conclave by thousands, and shouted, *Romano lo volemo lo Papa*, "We will have a Roman for Pope." Intimidated by the demonstration, they conferred the fatal honour on the Archbishop of Bari, a native of Naples, thus transformed into Urban VI. Between him and his involuntary electors there was never a good understanding. After a few months the dissatisfied majority, with some others, withdrew to Anagni, under pretence of avoiding the heat of Rome in summer, there formed themselves into conclave again, declared that the election of Urban had not been free, wrote him a contemptuous letter, addressed to him not as Pope, but as Bartolomeo di Pregnano, and elected a Genoese, who assumed the title of Clement VII. These two were thus constituted Antipopes, a circumstance by no means novel, but in the present instance extremely important, because then began "the great schism of the West," the division of the house, which continued during more than half a century, and preceded a gradual, but irrecoverable, fall. The Popedom could not endure the confusion, expense, and bloodshed arising out of the wars between the Antipopes and their partisans; and a numerously attended Council at Pisa (A.D. 1409) endeavoured to terminate the schism. After solemn and protracted deliberation, sentence was published that the holy universal Council, representing all the Church, to which it belonged to take cognizance and pronounce decision in that cause; after having examined all that had been done touching the union of the Church, and the schism between Pedro de Luna, called Benedict XIII., and Angelo Corrario, called Gregory XII., declared that they were both notoriously schismatic, abettors of schism, heretics, guilty of perjury, and of having violated their oaths; that they had scandalized the whole Church by their obstinacy; that they had fallen from all dignity, and were, *ipso facto*, separated from the Church. The Council forbade all the faithful to own them, or to favour them, under pain of excommunica-

tion; and annulled all their acts. But it was easier to pronounce the sentence than to enforce it. All the adherents of the two Antipopes would not submit to the authority of the Council. Alexander V., although duly elected by the Cardinals during the Council, did not receive universal obedience; and John XXIII., his successor, was prevailed on to convoke another assembly of the same kind, to meet at Constance, and institute further proceedings against his contumacious rivals. But no sooner was the Council assembled than he was surprised by solicitations to abdicate, for the sake, it was said, of the peace and union of the Church, the one great object which engaged the solicitude of all parties, who thought that if he would lead the way by such an example of self-denial, the other Antipopes might reasonably be urged to follow, or compelled to quit the field by the defection of the nations in their "obediences." With extreme reluctance, John gave a solemn promise of resignation in a meeting of the Council; but, after evading the fulfilment, secretly withdrew from the city in the disguise of a servant, wandered from place to place, was solemnly deposed, and afterwards imprisoned. The deposition of a Pope was a measure bold beyond the times, and excited a strong, but transient, feeling of indignation, even in many who had been clamorous for abdication by his own act. Gregory XII., reduced again to Angelo di Corrario, gladly accepted the inferior dignity and emolument of a Cardinal: but Benedict XIII., desperately tenacious of the forlorn Pontificate, first promised to lay down his tiara, then delayed; and, when pressed to compliance, held fast on punctilious objections. The Emperor himself went to Spain to enforce, by his presence, the persuasions of the King of Arragon, who then lay in his last sickness, and was even carried in a litter into the presence of the stubborn Priest, that he might entreat him to restore peace and concord to Christendom, by following the example of Gregory, and submitting to the fate of John. But all entreaty was in vain. The Emperor journeyed back again in anger; the King was enraged beyond description; Spain withdrew obedience from the impracticable Spaniard; the King Don Juan II. satisfied his "pure conscience" by a decision of Doctors, that obedience was no longer due; and having declared that Pedro de Luna was not a Pope, which Pedro retorted with a declaration that Juan was not a Christian, he calmly bore the harmless anathema, and left the deserted pretender to the Pontificate to end his days in voluntary banishment at Peñiscola, confident to the last that he was a true Pope. When on his death-bed, he made two Cardinals, his companions in exile, swear that they would elect a successor, and, faithful to their oath, they shut themselves up, as in conclave; and neither being able to elect the other by plurality of votes, they unanimously chose one Gil Muñoz, a Canon of Barcelona, to that dignity. Muñoz accepted their acclamation, created some new Cardinals, and played the Pope for a year or two, until he thought it prudent to lay aside the ridiculous pretension, condescended to absolve Martin V., whom the Council of Constance had elevated to the Roman See, after the deposition of John XXIII.; and then, abdicating the throne of Peñiscola, humbly kissed the slipper of the Holy Father whom he had

formerly discomforted with anathemas. Thus ended the last and longest schism of the Papacy; (A.D. 1429;) * but neither did the effects of the schism terminate in the elevation of Martin V., nor was the division itself confined to the persons and jurisdiction of the Anti-popes. The introduction of a new ecclesiastical principle, and the memorable quarrel with the Mendicant Friars, also contributed to the establishment of those antagonistic influences which opened a way for the Protestant Reformation.

When the Council of Constance would have deposed John XXIII., they issued an apologetic address to Christendom, justificatory of so extraordinary a proceeding; and before consummating the act of deposition, they endeavoured to prove that a Council, duly convened, was superior to a Pope, thus resuming the discussion which had begun in the Council of Pisa, which Council, by the deposition of two Anti-popes, had assumed that superiority, although, the legitimacy of both being disputed, the precedent of deposition became of little value. John XXIII., however, was acknowledged as a true Pope by the majority of Christendom; and those who would consider a Council competent to proceed against mere pretenders to the pontifical dignity, might yet demur to its deposition of a person canonically elected. The controversy was fully opened by Gerson, Chancellor of the Church and University of Paris, one of the most eminent theologians and canonists of his day, at the desire of the majority of the Council and of the Princes, but contrary to the wish of the Cardinals, who absented themselves during his delivery of a discourse pronounced expressly to establish the claim of the Council to exercise jurisdiction over the Pope. After maintaining some propositions relative to the headship of the Church, the orator proceeded to prove that, although the union between Christ and the Church cannot be dissolved, the union of the Vicar of Christ with his spouse, the Church, is not indissoluble; and that the Church, or a General Council representing the body of the faithful, is appointed by Christ to judge all persons, not excepting the Pope himself, who must hear and obey, under pain of being treated as a Heathen and a publican. The visible head, according to the doctrine of Gerson, could not repeal nor alter laws enacted in a General Council convened by a legal authority; and although the Church could not take away the fulness of the Papal power supernaturally conferred by Jesus Christ, she could restrain the use of it; and this maxim he strenuously recommended to the assembled fathers, as *the solid foundation of all ecclesiastical reform.* He specified cases in which it would be lawful for a Council to assemble without the summons, and even in spite of the prohibition, of a Pope, who would be bound to execute the decisions of such an assembly, under penalty of deposition. The University of Paris supported their Chancellor by sending a written judgment to Constance, drawn up in language of the utmost independence. They deemed the Church to be more necessary than the Pope, because there could not be salvation out of

* L'Enfant, History of the Councils of Pisa and of Constance; Fabre, Discours Préliminaire, servant d'Introduction à l'Histoire Ecclésiastique du 15me Siècle. Cronica del Señor Rey Don Juan II., &c. Valencia, 1779. Años 1414—1416.

the Church; but without the Pope salvation might be certainly obtained. The Pope, they affirmed, was for the Church, not the Church for the Pope. She has the greater dignity, as being the spouse, not the Vicar, of Jesus Christ; greater power, because the gates of hell cannot prevail against her, whereas Popes have been often subdued by vice and heresy; greater wisdom, because she is endued with manifold gifts which were never found in any single Pontiff. The Church, they said, is the fountain of power, and depository of the keys of the kingdom of heaven, which she delivers to her temporal chief, and may take out of his hands again, when she sees them to be misemployed, as a sword should be wrested from the grasp of a madman; and the whole argument is wound up with the inevitable conclusion that, in many cases, a Council is above the Pope. Nothing could be more contrary to Papal pretensions, and Papal practice too; for it had become common for Popes to bring decrees into Councils, ready prepared, and only read for the purpose of being adopted by obsequious assent; and the custom was at length taken to be law. The Patriarch of Antioch, supported by a minority, prepared and defended the thesis that the Pope is superior to the Council, and that decrees are to be formed in the name of the Pope, and not in the name of the Council. Pierre d'Ailly, Cardinal Bishop of Cambray, maintained the opposite; and the subject was brought into the light of a vigorous controversy. Nor did the controversy terminate at Constance. D'Ailly composed an elaborate treatise, in which he endeavoured to define the relative rights of the Church and of the Pope, avoiding, as he said, the extreme opinions of the Vaudois, Wycliffe, and Huss, who would divest him of all temporal power; and those of "the Herodians," equally extreme, who imagined that the Messiah was to be a temporal Monarch, having a Vicar invested with authority over temporal estates. This work, written a few years before the invention of printing, was soon committed to the press, and contributed to give permanence to what Mr. Hallam not inappropriately calls the Whig politics,—political phraseology, however unsuitable to these pages, is more descriptive of that earthly system than religious,—*the Whig politics of the Catholic Church.* Then the advocates of principles which had been received all over Europe with mute acquiescence, began to be distinguished as Ultramontanes, because they were chiefly found beyond the Alps, the only region where the assumed divinity of the Pope could be taught without encountering general contradiction. Rome and Avignon were no longer the seats of antagonist jurisdictions; but Italy and the rest of Europe were the fields whereon adverse principles prevailed, not less fatal to the unity and consequent power of the system than had been the alternate maledictions and battles of the Antipopes.* The two parties have subsisted to the present day; but the notion of a necessity of Papal presence and consent is borne away on the tide of events; the Pope is less and less prominent in ecclesiastical proceedings; and a careful observer may now see the fruit of the doctrine of Pisa and Constance

* L'Enfant, Council of Constance, book ii., sect. 3—5, 45, 46; iv. 105.

in the independent action of the episcopate in different nations, and the obvious disintegration of the Church itself.*

Both before and during the removal of the Popes to Avignon, and the schism of the Pontificate, another cause of decay existed in the bosom of the Church, and in that section of the Clergy which had been most subservient to the ambition of their chief. The independent origin of the diocesses of Christendom provided the secular Clergy with reasons for withstanding the encroachments of the Bishop of Rome; and in each nation, both civil and ecclesiastical authorities, even when submitting to such encroachments, could look back to times when their fathers had not bowed under the yoke of an alien. Not so the monastic orders. They had been created by Papal Bulls, and might be dissolved by the same authority. In return for their existence, and with constant prevision of danger from the jealousy of the secular Clergy, or rival institutions of the same kind, they professed loyalty to the supreme Pontiff, and became increasingly valuable as instruments of his power. Of all others, the Mendicant Friars were most intimately united to him, and seemed least likely to manifest disaffection. They were professedly poor, the *pauperes Christi*, who lived on the alms of the people, having nothing of their own. Professing to imitate Christ, who was undoubtedly poor, and received the offerings of those who loved him, they violated his precept by leading a life of abject beggary,† and yet evaded the rules of their

* At this time (1849) some eminent Preachers and writers of the Church of Rome (P. Ventura, for example, the most eloquent Preacher in Italy) are declaring that the Pope should resign his temporal sovereignty; and a Synod of Bishops of the United States of America have solemnly pronounced a similar judgment. Yet to maintain this sovereignty for him, Rome has been besieged, at his request, and occupied, after much bloodshed, by the French.

† The writer of these pages believes that our Lord, implicitly, at least, prohibited mendicity under pretext of religion, in the instructions which he gave to the twelve when he sent them forth to preach; and takes leave to translate for the English reader part of a note on Matt. x. 9, 10, written for a country where swarms of begging Friars were to be seen everywhere.—"Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey; neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves; for the workman is worthy of his meat." Μὴ κτήσησθε, "provide not" for this journey. The verb κτάομαι signifies to "acquire," or "provide," either by purchase or in any other way. (Compare Gen. iv. 1; xii. 5, *et passim*, in the Septuagint.) So Hesychius explains it, and an ancient Latin glossary has κτάομαι, *acquiro*; κτησάμενος, *adeptus*. The Vulgate translates incorrectly, by *nolite possidere*, "possess not," a version suited to the cloisters, where they teach that the religious should consign their gold and silver to the common stock of the fraternity, maintaining the individual members in an affluent beggary.

Brass, χαλκὸν, money of the lowest value.

Purses, ζώνας, "girdles." They carried money in the girdle, in order to keep it with the greater security; and, according to Livy, (xxxiii. 29,) "negotiandi ferme caussà argentum in zonis habentes;" "carrying money in their girdles in order to lay it out in trade." But Jesus Christ would not have his servants to appear like merchants, and manifest desire after temporal riches; but devote themselves entirely to calling sinners to repentance. They should not take πήραν εἰς ὁδὸν, "a scrip for the journey." While they carried not money, and lived above temporal interests, they were to trust in the care of Divine Providence: yet, poor as they were, the Apostles were to be free from everything like meanness; and if they were not merchants, carrying money in their girdles, neither were they permitted to conduct themselves like persons that with scrip or wallet go begging food.

> "Ne mendica ferat barbati prandia nudi
> Dormiat et tetrico cum cane, pera rogat."—(Mart. Epig., xiv., 91.)

founders, Dominic and Francis, especially the latter, by an ostentation of rapidly acquired wealth. Splendid monasteries, wide domains, granaries and cellars abundantly stored with the offerings of superstitious multitudes, betrayed an utter departure from the first idea of poverty which had characterized the birth of their institutions; and to sanction, if not to hide, the fraud, the Popes had declared that Monks were but the usufructuaries of that property, and the Pope for the time being, the proprietor. Under this fiction the mendicants wallowed in luxury, and scandalized both Priests and people by their pride and ostentation. The field, therefore, lay open to a monastic reformer; and one made his appearance in the latter part of the thirteenth century. The Minorites, or begging Franciscan Friars, held a general chapter at Strasburg in the year 1282, attended by thirty-three provincials, and seven hundred brethren. In that chapter Friar Pierre Jean d'Olive was accused of having spoken too freely against the lax observance of his order, and of having composed and circulated writings replete with error, and even tinged with heresy. In his vehement censures none were spared, not even the superiors, whom he would have to be corrected or expelled; and with equal severity he declaimed against the indolence, sensuality, and pride of the Prelates of the Church. D'Olive was not present in the chapter; but having acquired considerable influence by the austere purity of his manners, with learning and eloquence, cultivated during a long course of study in his cell as a Franciscan, from the twelfth year of his age, the General, Bonne-Grace, was directed to go into the province of France, and examine the brother and his writings. The accused Friar hastened to Avignon, where he met the General, and pleaded his own cause with some apparent success. But the cry of reproach raised by the severe ascetic could not be suppressed. His invectives were echoed throughout all the provinces of the order; and every one who desired to attain either the experience or the credit of what was strangely called evangelical perfection, joined in the outcry against the less rigid members of the Franciscan communities. When D'Olive was on his death-bed, he professed entire attachment

"The wallet begs that it may not carry the dinner of a naked and unshaven beggar, nor lie with a grim dog." The satirist alludes to the Cynic philosophers, who, affecting poverty, used to go about among the poor, begging alms. In another place he seems to picture to the life a Capuchin or Franciscan Friar,

> "Cui dat latratos obvia turba cibos
> Esse putas Cynicum, deceptus imagine falsâ."—Lib. iv., Ep. 53.

"To whom people give victuals in the street, when he begs them like a dog. You think him a Cynic, but are deceived by a false appearance." Our Lord, then, in his infinite wisdom, took from his messengers the occasion of mendicity, by forbidding them to carry a scrip, or wallet, which might be taken for a sign of beggary.

The labourer is worthy of his meat.—Among Jews, Arabs, and other Orientals, it was customary to render hospitality to strangers, as in fulfilment of a religious duty. The Apostles were worthy of the utmost hospitality, in return for the benefit they conferred on those who gave them welcome; "for the labourer is worthy of his meat." And well said St. Paul, that "if any one will not work, let him not eat." The Ministers of God, when they perform their sacred duties faithfully and diligently, are worthy of their meat, because they labour for the welfare of their fellow-men, both in this world and that which is to come. But to them, as to others, must be applied the apostolic rule: "If any one will not work, let him not eat."—Los Cuatro Evanjelios traducidos del Griego al Español, é ilustrados con notas, por Don G. H. Rule.

to the Church of Rome, but solemnly delivered a declaration of the convictions he had avowed through life. It was essential, he said, to the evangelical life of the Franciscan, that he should renounce all temporal right, and content himself with the simple *use* of things. It was a mortal sin to persist in justifying laxity and transgressions of the order of St. Francis, and to coerce and persecute those who endeavoured to conform to its original simplicity. As scandals were more sinful in proportion to their greater publicity, so were the builders of huge and magnificent monasteries eminently criminal. And the contrivances of the Friars to obtain money from the living and the dying, together with some other unbecoming customs, deserved unmeasured condemnation. The sayings of the ascetic were remembered after his decease; his writings circulated, and were compared with those of St. Francis himself, who was thought to have been divinely inspired. These authorities not only contradicted the practice of the majority, but a decretal of Pope Nicholas III., inserted in the body of canon law, and therefore acknowledged as binding by the Church. Fortified by the example, as they fancied, of the Saviour, and by the law of St. Francis, thought to be hardly second in authority, as well as by that of the Church, they hotly contended against the notion that Friars could call food or raiment *their own;* and denounced, as mortally sinful, the practice of storing provisions in granaries or cellars, with a thousand other things inveterately accustomed; and they carried their dissent so far, as to secede from their monasteries, elect new superiors, and a new General, establish themselves with him chiefly in Sicily, and organize an entire system of provincial government. This aroused John XXII., who annulled the Bull of Nicholas, poured contempt on their sorry habits and scant cowls, cursed them as heretics, and exhorted the King of Sicily to banish them from that island. They saved themselves by flight at first, but were persecuted wherever found. Yet many stood undaunted, and denied that the Pope had power to set aside the law of the Church. His power, however, was vindicated by the Inquisitors, and four brethren were soon burnt at Marseilles (A.D. 1318) to overawe the contumacious. Persecution on the one side, and resistance on the other, rose higher and higher. The General of the original order became involved in the political quarrel with the Pope and the Emperor, joined the latter, acknowledged an Antipope, went into Germany, patronised the discontented, and, together with the Emperor and Antipope, gave them the full benefit of his patronage. The Fratricelli, or Beghards and Beguines, as they were variously called, multiplied there with extraordinary rapidity, and decried the dogma of Papal infallibility so effectually, that the world ceased to reverence the pretenders to that attribute, and was prepared to receive higher lessons from Wycliffe, Huss, Jerome, Savonarola, Luther, and the whole host of Protestant Reformers. But meanwhile, John XXII. employed the Prelates and Inquisitors throughout his "obedience," to extirpate the heresy; and was zealously obeyed in Italy, Sicily, and the south of France. In Germany, also, (A.D. 1347,) the Emperor Charles IV. and the Pope Clement VI. being friends, the schismatic

Minorites were delivered over to persecution, and many suffered death. Those severities confirmed the survivers in their ideas respecting the meritoriousness of absolute poverty, and in their abhorrence of Roman pomp: each sufferer was regarded as a martyr, and some of them produced a powerful impression by the display of indomitable constancy. So at Avignon, a Priest named Jean de Chastillon made this public declaration, just before his execution: "I say that Pope John was a heretic, and enemy of the holy Church, by the errors contained in his four constitutions, *Ad conditorem*, *Cùm inter nonnullos*, *Quia quorumdam*, and *Quia vir reprobus*,* which are evidently contrary to the holy Scriptures, and the life of the Apostles. And I maintain that the Popes his successors, Benedict XII., Clement VI., and Innocent VI., who have encouraged and maintained the same heresies, were heretical and excommunicate, and ought to have been deprived of all dignity. I say the same of all those Prelates and others who are appointed to maintain the Catholic faith." England partook largely in the spirit of this monastic schism; the secular Clergy strenuously resisted encroachments on their rights committed by the original mendicants; and Richard, Archbishop of Armagh, having signalized himself in the affair, was deputed to solicit redress at the Papal court, and accordingly presented himself to Innocent VI. as the advocate of his discontented brethren. But neither the fanaticism of the strait-coated Franciscan beggars, nor the reasonable dissatisfaction of the priesthood, could induce the Popes to withhold protection from their militia, the rich mendicants, who retained their honours and possessions, while the malcontents, who chose so to do, were suffered to establish themselves under a more strict observance; but a numerous party, still known as Beghards or Fratricelli, who would not submit to any reconciliation, were treated as heretics, haunted out of every refuge, and melted away under the rigour of persecution.†

From the thirteenth century onward, the laity grew increasingly opposed to the demands of the Clergy. The general history of Europe abounds in evidence of this important fact. Everywhere efforts were made to restrain the accumulation of wealth by the Church, whether in the form of revenue or donation. Many decrees and statutes against mortmain are cited by jurists from the records of those ages; and the struggles between civil and ecclesiastical corporations, between Popes and Princes, constitute a great part of European history after the cessation of Crusades. The moral influence of the Clergy could not but be weakened during such conflicts; and when people saw that their dissoluteness was equal to their rapacity, they could not but listen with favour to every teacher who brought doctrines adverse to the Church. All this was but worldly, yet it opened the way for something better; and we may now bestow a few moments in marking the introduction of evangelical truth. While

* Such documents were distinguished by the first words in them, like the *Magnificat*, *Benedicite*, &c.

† Fleury, lxxxvii., 64; lxxxix., 54; xcii., 42, 43, 62—64; xciii., 53; xciv., 24; xcvi, 25; Mosheim, cent. xiv., part ii., sect. 17—34; Foxe, Acts and Monuments, book v.

the public mind was aroused, and often exasperated, Clergy against laity, and laity against Clergy, conscience was troubled by some alarming natural visitations, and by the horrors of a general pestilence; and such a turn was given to the thoughts of men as could scarcely have resulted from the discussion of questions more political than religious. First of all, a great comet (A.D. 1337) seemed to portend calamities which actually followed. Then swarms of locusts, in some parts of Europe, devoured the fruits of the land, and induced scarcity, if not famine. Amidst the sufferings of dearth, a tremendous earthquake overwhelmed with terror the populations of Cyprus, Greece, Italy, and the Alpine valleys as far as Basle. Mountains sank, villages were swallowed up, or buried the inhabitants under their ruins. The air was turbid, unusual meteors were regarded as messengers of Divine wrath, while both man and beast languished for want of sufficient or healthful food. In China or Tartary a plague broke out, sweeping away myriads, passed westward, leaving towns depopulated in its track through Asia, visited Egypt, and, being conveyed, as it was thought, by merchant-ships, re-appeared in some of the ports of Europe, but first in Italy. Florence, a chief mart of the west, suffered under the scourge during five months, until, it was said, three-fifths of the inhabitants had perished. None of the great cities were spared within the broad area of devastation. The dead were often laid in the streets to be carried away by any who had strength or spirit left for performing the perilous duty of interment, or corpses putrified in the deserted houses. The living, hardened by familiarity with death, or stupified with terror, abandoned the sufferers to the rapid progress of disease, forgetting the endearments of nearest kindred. Priests fled; Monks, having little hope of life, sought meritorious death, and plunged into the pest, vainly offering an absolution that could not be given, and as vainly seeking for themselves a reward that could not be found. Others attributed the calamity to Turks and Jews, who were supposed to have poisoned the waters; and multitudes of Jews were massacred, despite the exhortations and threats of the Pope, who declared that the murderers should be excommunicated; and innocent blood called for vengeance, when penitential prayer might have prevailed to turn aside the destroying angel. Panic-stricken populations saw the tide of death approaching, knew of no human means to avert or mitigate the visitation, but either awaited it in stupid silence, or wasted their strength in litanies and penance. Beasts as well as men perished. The labours of agriculture and trade were suspended. In England, the Parliament was prorogued, because members, even if alive, durst not venture into any place of meeting. For the same reason warfare ceased: God imposed an awful truce on dying armies. No complete history of that pestilence could possibly be written, nor any computation of the victims be depended on. The vulgar calculation was, that nine-tenths of the human race had perished: a cooler estimate sets down the mortality as one-half of the infected populations, which is probably too low. One hundred thousand are said to have been buried in London, an immense proportion of inhabitants in the year

1348. Although despair and apathy had assumed most revolting forms during the plague itself, a deep religious feeling appeared afterwards in many places, but was unhappily perverted by fraud and fanaticism. "The devout," a sect of voluntary penitents who had gained notoriety in Italy in the preceding century, now taking the new and more descriptive name of Flagellants, abounded in Italy, Germany, and Hungary. They professed to believe that a flagellation, performed publicly during thirty-four days, would turn away the wrath of God. Their custom was to walk in procession through the streets of the town where they intended to undergo the penance; and the exhibition at Spire may be taken as an example of their manner of proceeding. About the middle of June, (A.D. 1349,) some two hundred of them visited that city, conducted by one chief and two companions, to whom they paid entire obedience. They entered Spire in the morning, and, amidst a large concourse of spectators, proceeded towards the cathedral, formed a circle before the building, made their feet bare, and stripped themselves naked to the waist. Then they entered the circle, solemnly walked round, and, after having made the circuit, knelt down, with arms across, each holding a knotted leather thong, laden with pieces of iron. The hindermost then rose, passed along the circle, gently striking each fellow-penitent with his thong in passing, and knelt in front, each rising in turn and doing the same, until the mutual flagellation was completed; the whole company chanting prayers in German during that part of the ceremony. Three of them, having strong voices, then stood up, chanting aloud, and lashing their bare sides with those heavy thongs, adapting the strokes to the measure and cadence of the hymn. The others accompanied with voice and action. After this, at a given signal, they all knelt down, bleeding and praying, the three leaders pronouncing a bidding, which was to implore the pity of God on the people, and to intercede for their friends, their foes, all sinners, and the souls in purgatory. The task being accomplished, they dressed themselves, and those who had kept their clothes and baggage took possession of the ground and underwent scourging after the same fashion. The savage penance was followed by the reading, in a loud voice, of a letter, which was said to have been delivered by an angel in the church of St. Peter at Jerusalem. It set forth that Jesus Christ was angry with the world for its crimes, especially for the desecration of the Lord's day, breaking of the Friday fast, blasphemies, usuries, and adulteries; that the Virgin Mary and the angels had asked the Saviour to show mercy, and he had answered that every one should set himself apart to be flogged for thirty-four days. More than a hundred persons obeyed the letter at Spire, about a thousand at Strasburg, and the elements of a new sect were rapidly collecting; but the Pope suppressed the Flagellants by a Bull before six months were over.* Yet while a religious feeling possessed the minds of many, inquirers found none who could tell them what they should do to be saved, except here and there a solitary remnant of the

* Fleury, xcv., 44, 49; Menzel, History of Germany, Second Period, CLXXVIII.; Moreri, *Flagellantes*.

old heretics, for most of them had been martyred, or forced to apostatize, by the Crusaders and Inquisitors of the preceding century; and whoever should confess any portion of Gospel truth not admitted by the Clergy, was instantly marked and put to silence. Fears remained to be subdued, questions to be answered; and as nothing was at hand on which the soul could repose with confidence, a strong desire to look into futurity laid hold on the more intelligent, and brought out a testimony to the prevalent persuasion that some great crisis was approaching. Joachim, Abbot of Flora, in the kingdom of Naples, who had flourished during the latter half of the twelfth, and a few years of the thirteenth, century, was believed to have possessed "an infused knowledge" of divine mysteries, and thereby, through a lower kind of inspiration, to have perceived the true interpretation of prophecy. This gift was long thought to be attainable by devout meditation; and Papists, who despise our claim to the right of private judgment, and treat scornfully our confidence in divine assistance while prayerfully endeavouring to exercise that judgment, may be referred to the history of a multitude of persons in their own communion who pretended, or aspired, to an immeasurably higher participation in spiritual wisdom than any of us ever presume to seek. During the earlier part of the excitement above described, general attention was drawn to the prophecies, or prophetical interpretations, of the Cistercian, which were studied with unspeakable avidity, and so famous did he become, that the Monks of his order endeavoured (A.D. 1346) to have him canonized. His prophecies displeased the Clergy, because they foretold the revolution or destruction of their Church. But the expectation of such an event sank deep into the mind of all who ventured to approach the subject. Nicholas Oresme, an eminent Frenchman, in an elaborate sermon delivered before Urban V. and his Cardinals, on Isai. lvi. 1: "Thus saith the Lord, Keep ye judgment, and do justice; for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed;" descanting with bold fidelity on the corruption of the Romish Church, warned them of tribulation and affliction near at hand; and exhorted them to avert these by repentance, following the example of the Ninevites. Bridget, canonized as a saint and Prophetess, affirmed, out of the Apocalypse, that the Papal throne should be thrown into the depths of the sea, like a millstone; and that the Cardinals, assessors of the Pope, should burn with brimstone. Catherine of Sienna, fanatic though she was, gathered from the word of God that He would purify his church, arouse the spirit of the elect, raise up a set of holy Pastors, to the universal gladness of the faithful, and convert the Heathen to the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls. Militz of Prague, professing to be constrained by the Holy Spirit, went to Rome, preached there publicly, and affirmed, before the Inquisitor, that Antichrist was come, the Church desolate, and iniquity abounding. Wycliffe, Huss, and many others, adopted the predictions of Hildegarde, that God would strip the Clergy of their wealth, and that the people would desert them, saying, "Go, ye teachers of wickedness, subverters of the truth, brethren of the Shunammite, fathers of heresies, false Apostles, who have feigned your-

selves to follow the life of the Apostles, and yet have not fulfilled it in any part: sons of iniquity! we will not follow the knowledge of your ways, for pride and presumption have deceived you, and insatiable concupiscence hath subverted your erroneous hearts; and when ye would yet ascend higher than was meet or comely for you, by the just judgment of God, ye are fallen back into perpetual disgrace and shame!" *

The Albigenses long seemed to have been almost extirpated from the subalpine provinces of France, and the Inquisition overawed all except a few, very few, bold confessors; heresy, so called, made few advances; but while earthquake, pestilence, and famine retributed on Europe the wrongs inflicted upon Asia, and provinces, polluted by persecution, trembled under the avenging scourge, an appeal to divine revelation, and an ardent longing after prophetic knowledge within the Church of Rome itself, brought that apostacy to the test of Scripture, and induced a new habit of appealing to the word of God.

When Christendom had learned that the nations of Islâm were not to be conquered by the sword, and began to suspect that Judaism could not be destroyed by oppression, expatriation, and massacre, the Head of the church raised up men to give the first hints, and to supply materials for conducting the labour of evangelization on better principles. Raymond Lully, born a Jew, on the island of Majorca, was converted to Christianity; but never consented to its last corruptions, nor was imbued with the bigotry and bitterness of its degenerate priesthood. Preferring the milder spirit of the Franciscans, he became a Minorite, and was branded with the mark of heresy by the Dominicans, who thought themselves to be the chosen propagators of the Christian faith. But Lully was occupied by one desire, that of propagating Christianity among the Moors, by fair argument and liberal instruction. He wrote books in Arabic, or translated them into that language, then the medium of history and science in southern Europe, Africa, and the Levant. He travelled to acquire knowledge, and everywhere advised the Clergy to lay aside the sword and the firebrand, and employ their pens for the conversion of Mohammedans and Jews. For this end he visited Rome, and endeavoured, but without immediate success, to obtain the Papal sanction of oriental studies. At length, in the Council of Vienne, (A.D. 1312,) he carried his point. That Council, failing every endeavour to establish their faith by violence, ordered that masters should be appointed to teach Hebrew, Arabic, and Chaldee in the court of Rome, and the Universities of Paris, Oxford, Bologna, and Salamanca, among the choicest youth of France, England, Italy, and Spain, and made provision for two such Professors in each place. Raymond then applied himself with redoubled zeal to controversy with the Moors, and was consequently stoned to death in Africa; (A.D. 1315;) but his work abides; and eastern literature, most valuable of all human contributions to the understanding of the sacred text, began to be cultivated, to some small extent, under the highest ecclesiastical sanction, in those seats of learning. Next came Nicholas de Lyra, a native of Normandy, also

* Foxe, Acts and Monuments, books v. and vi.

born a Jew; but, to use the false and inflated language of a biographer, born again in the water of baptism, and invested with the sacred habit of the seraphic religion in the convent of Verneuil. He consecrated his Hebrew and Rabbinical knowledge to the exposition of the holy Scriptures both of the Old and New Testament, intending to facilitate the conversion of his brethren; but, in fact, providing materials for the better instruction of Gentile students who had hitherto bowed to the exclusive authority of patristical expositors, men almost ignorant of the original language of the Old Testament, and the Hebrew element of conception and language in the New. As a commentator, he opened the way for the masters of learning in the Reformation of the sixteenth century; and of him it has been pleasantly said, that if he had not *harped*, Luther would never have *danced*.

"Si Lyra non lyrasset,
Lutherus non saltasset."

His Commentary was completed in Paris, (A.D. 1330,) where he had expounded the Scriptures in his convent, not failing to expose the ignorance and even the errors of his contemporaries. Thus were the stores of academic learning enriched. Those new chairs raised the Universities into higher estimation; nations regarded them as necessary to their honour; and of this an example is afforded in the zeal of Charles IV., King of the Romans, who, on his accession to the throne of Bohemia, (A.D. 1346,) solicited and obtained of the Pope sanction for the establishment of a University at Prague, soon to be the seat of an illustrious Reformer, and of doctrines utterly hostile to the Church of Rome.* But we must proceed to consider how the confessors and martyrs of that age, as heralds of the Protestant Reformation, maintained and suffered for the truth.

During the schism of the Papacy, and quarrels of the Popes and Clergy with the European Sovereigns, Italy, in its utmost extent, from Nice to Trieste, and from the Tyrolese to Calabria, was least troubled by persecution. The political condition of the Italian states was unfavourable to the aggrandizement of the Church. In those days the Waldenses enjoyed some degree of rest. Their humble worship was conducted in conjunction with a godly discipline. On producing sufficient testimonials, the candidate for the office of Barbe, or Minister, was admitted to a course of scriptural instruction, and set apart by imposition of hands to the holy ministry. Their children were carefully taught the elements of Christian doctrine; and a Catechism is yet extant in proof of their care to reduce the saving truths of the Gospel to a certain form, and to supply the memory with material for constant meditation. Following a custom of the apostolic churches, they not only maintained their Pastors by free offerings, but gave them alms, which were carried by them into a Council holden annually; and then, as by a Committee of distribution, placed into the hands of stewards to be divided among travellers and the poor. In those

* Fleury, lxxxviii., 45; lxxxix., 59; xci., 60; xciv., 8; xcv., 36; Moreri, Dict., under the names Lully and Nicholas de Lyra; Mosheim, cent. xiv., part ii., chap. i, 3.

Councils the Pastors alone assembled, to treat of ecclesiastical affairs, and especially of the government of their widely-scattered flocks.* Their law of discipline required the correction of such as walked ungodly, erred in doctrine, transgressed the rules of charity, or sinned away their hope of heaven. Private sins were corrected by private admonition; but public offences were visited with public censure. When these methods failed, the incorrigible were expelled. Those Waldenses, striving to keep themselves unspotted from the world, shunned public spectacles and entertainments with a strictness that has brought on their memory the contempt of some modern writers. By habitual perusal of the word of God, and of devotional writings of a highly scriptural character, they cherished holy affections, while the circulation of controversial tracts kept alive a just abhorrence of Romanism. Undismayed by terror of enemies, and superior to motives of mere expediency, the Barbes maintained the purity of their church by first watching against unfaithfulness in themselves, of which the suspension of one of their number, Giovanni of Lucerne, for seven years, is an eminent proof.† But as all that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution, they were not permitted to continue unmolested. The Pope appointed one Jean de Badis, a French Inquisitor, to suppress the sect (A.D. 1332). Their assemblies were numerous, so many as five hundred persons often meeting in the same place; and when assaulted, they scrupled not to defend themselves, so that Friar Jean retreated from a work in which he could not be sufficiently supported. Yet persecution continued, and one of his successors, Francesco Borelli, could boast of having delivered, during thirteen years, one hundred and fifty persons to be burned at Grenoble. From the valley of Fraissiniere eighty were carried to the stake, and their property, being confiscated, was equally divided between the Inquisitors themselves, and the temporal

* It would seem, from passages in Morland's manuscripts, that spiritual and secular functions were not intended to be exercised by the same person. "Regidors son eslegi del poble & Preire segond la diversita de l'obrement en l'unita de Christ." "Rectors, or managers, are elected from the people and Elders, according to the diversity of the work in the unity of Christ." They all met together once a year, and first transacted their temporal business. "Las pecunias lasquals son donnas a nos del poble son porta de nos el predict Concili General, & lioras en commun devant tuit nos, lasquals son ceuillius de li nostre Major, & part de lor es despartia en aquilli que an a far camin enaima est vist esser besoguivol a lor, & part de la dicta pecunia es dona a li paure." "The moneys which are given to us by the people, are carried by us to the aforesaid General Council, and delivered in common before us all, the which are collected by our Stewards, and part of them is distributed among those who have to travel, when it appears to be necessary for them, and part of the said money is given to the poor." They are said to have propagated their doctrine throughout Italy by travelling, and thus gaining access to persons of all classes, and enjoying hospitality in the houses of their brethren on presenting credentials, like the ἐπιστολαὶ συστατικαί, "letters commendatory," of the early churches. The lay Elders, or managers, having performed their part of the work, proceeded no farther in the assembly; but "nos Pastor nos aiosten tuit ensemp una vez l'an, azo que ensemp tratten las nostras facendas per Concili General." "We that are Pastors meet all together once in the year, in order that we may together treat of our affairs in a General Council." One might almost say, that after the mixed financial Committee, they held their conference of Ministers alone. The difference is only in the phraseology, not in the fact, which exhibits a remarkable resemblance to Wesleyan Methodism.

† Morland, History of the Evangelical Churches of the Valley of Piedmont, chapters v. to viii. inclusive.

Lords.* For nearly seventy years the Italian Inquisition could not find strength enough to hunt them to death, as it had hunted the Albigenses of Languedoc, and the neighbouring provinces of France; but, at last, (A.D. 1400,) a troop of persecutors appeared in the valley of Pragela, where was one of their most flourishing settlements, murdered some, and drove the bulk of the population into the mountains. It was Christmas, the mountain heights were laden with snow, and there, at an elevation beyond any human dwelling, and where the rigour of winter was untempered even by a noon-day sun, men and women, mothers clasping their babes to bosoms no longer capable of affording warmth, faint, famished, frozen, sank together on the snow; snow-storms covered them; and when the returning sun melted away the wintry grave, their putrid corpses were exposed to view, and told the shuddering goatherd that from ruthless Priests no pity could be had, not even by woman or babe not brought under the power of his Church, no compassion shown to them who feared God more than death. And so did the Waldenses fear Him.† Their constancy was honoured, and, for more than seventy years, they not only maintained the ground in those Alpine valleys, but propagated their doctrine throughout Italy by means of Barbes, who usually travelled by two and two; and, even in Rome itself, were hospitably received by brethren established there. The Romish Clergy of the diocess of Turin vainly endeavoured to put down the heresy, and at last the Pope, Xystus IV., appointed an Inquisitor to institute proceedings against them; (A.D. 1473;) but the only result of his labour seems to have been an official report, containing proof that the inhabitants generally were in a state of separation from his Church, both as to doctrine and discipline,—a fact which had been notorious for many centuries. After another pause of ten years, the Archbishop of the province undertook a similar investigation, and with the like result; finding all the people of the valleys of Fraissiniere, Argenteria, and Loisia to be "most infamous and suspected." But during that interval, methods of intimidation were often tried, and sufficient show of violence was made to induce many to emigrate into foreign countries. In most of the towns and cities of Piedmont there were martyrs to the faith; and from the scanty records accessible, a few names have been gathered of those which are eternally written in heaven. Giordano Tertian was burnt at Susa, and Hippolito Roussiere at Turin. In the same city, Hugo Chiamp de Fenestrelles was disembowelled, and his mutilated body exposed to public insult. In one valley three thousand persons were murdered, either by the sword, or smothered by fires lighted at the mouths of the caves into which they had gone for refuge. Still the Waldenses withstood their persecutors, and Rome was compelled to acknowledge herself vanquished by the faith and patience of heretics, or hazard an open contest. The latter alternative was taken. The Lord Innocent VIII., by divine Providence Pope, and servant of the servants of God, issued a Bull, (A.D. 1487,) appointing Albertus de Capitaneis his Legate, and Commissioner-General for the extirpation of heretics out of the dominions of his

* Milner, cent. xiii., chap. 4. † Morland, book ii., chap. 1.

beloved son, Charles, Duke of Savoy. After reciting the damnable errors of those people, he confessed that one Inquisitor after another had tried in vain to overcome their obstinacy, that they had shut their ears like the deaf adder, refused to lay aside their most evil and perverse errors, going on from bad to worse, that they had dared to preach publicly, drawing aside many from the faith, despised the excommunications and interdicts of the Inquisitor, pulled down his house, destroyed the furniture, killed one of his servants, and resisted the authority of their temporal Lords. In other words, that when they had been attacked in their dwellings, driven to hide themselves in caverns, and hunted like wild beasts over the mountains; and when "the secular arm" had been extended against them at the bidding of cowardly Priests who dared not execute their own sentences; they manfully took up arms in self-defence. The Commissioner was instructed to enforce the authority of the Inquisitor, and see that the Bishops did their duty for the extermination of the heretics. The King of France and the Princes of the German confederacy were summoned by this Bull to join their forces with those of the Duke of Savoy, to take up the shield of that holy faith which they had received in baptism, and attack in every seasonable manner those detestable enemies of holy Church. Or, if the Commissioner should think it expedient, —that is to say, if the Princes should hesitate to raise troops for this purpose,—the Legate was authorized to have a crusade preached, that people, independently of their governors, might take the saving sign of the Cross upon their hearts and garments, and thereby obtain a plenary indulgence for all their sins. The Ecclesiastic who would not preach death to heretics, and the secular person, of whatever rank, who would not inflict it, should be degraded from priestly dignity and office, or deprived of all his worldly honours, titles, and privileges, according to their guilt of disobedience and rebellion, and be thenceforth persecuted with all the terrors and weapons that the Church had at her command. As for the Legate, Innocent offered him heaven as a future reward; but stimulated him to diligence in the execution of the horrible commission by hope of preferment in the Church. The Legate set to work with great zeal, obtained a list of principal persons, whom he caused to be cited by proclamation to appear before himself, which they would not submit to do; and were therefore declared to be excommunicate, and delivered over to the secular arm, to be dealt with as stubborn and rebellious heretics. Two noblemen of Dauphiny were engaged to head an army, and invade the valleys; but the inhabitants had already fled, and were dispersed among the caverns and fastnesses of the mountains where no army could act. Messages were therefore sent, offering mercy if they would return to their dwellings, and abjure their faith. Some, pressed by hunger, accepted the overture; twelve or fifteen of them, smitten with remorse, fled again secretly; but the greater number submitted to pronounce a solemn abjuration, and promised to do penance. Others, who had defended themselves in their hiding-places for two years, and others also, who had held out for so long as five years, yielded to the summons, until at last almost all who had survived the rigour of persecution returned to their

long-deserted homes, and engaged to wear crosses on their garments in sign of penitence. But when the soldiery were withdrawn, and only Priests remained to occupy the churches, the penitential crosses were laid aside, mass was deserted, Waldensian worship was again performed, and the report reached Rome that the crusade had been ineffectual, after all. An army of eighteen thousand men was then collected, and with a multitude of volunteer crusaders rushed into the country. But as the fugitive inhabitants dispersed, the force was broken into small companies; and when those companies had wandered over the valleys for about a year, subsisting on plunder, the Duke of Savoy, weary of the affair, interposed his influence, and obtained peace for his persecuted subjects. He even yielded to an impulse of compassion, and pleaded in their favour; and when Vaudois fathers brought their children into his presence to prove that the offspring of heretics were not monsters, as the Priests had told him, he encouraged the infants to approach, returned their smiles, and bade the men go home, and be assured of liberty and protection. But in those days Princes had little power: the promises of the Duke were set at nought by the Inquisitors, who again and again brought crusaders to spread burning and bloodshed through Piedmont; until the Waldenses, finding human succour to be in vain, cast themselves on the help of God, ran to arms, repelled and overcame the enemy, and their descendants occupied the country without suffering invasion, for another hundred years. Thus did the Head of the church preserve his witnesses hereafter to unite in the glorious labours of the Protestant Reformation.*

As if to maintain by terror an authority which Rome could no longer exercise by any other means, the Inquisition failed not to commit heretics to the flames in almost every country of Europe; or Bishops, acting as Inquisitors, where that tribunal was not established, did the same. No doubt many of the victims were fanatics, mere revolters against the Clergy, political offenders, or objects of private hatred. The poverty of history, and the malice of the murderers, leaves them in obscurity; and, after having related the sufferings of the Waldenses of Piedmont, and promised to relate the revival of religion in England by means of Wycliffe, little remains to be narrated here; except, indeed, as regards the Waldensian emigrants, who were everywhere pursued by the common enemy of all righteousness. The "fourteen men and women" whom Limborch, on the authority of Bzovius, briefly states to have been burnt in Bohemia, were probably Waldenses; and Walter, burnt at Cologne, (A.D. 1322,) is described as Chief of the sect of Lollards, or praying people.† By sentence of a Council holden at Mentz, (A.D. 1387,) thirty-six citizens of that city, convicted of the Waldensian heresy, were burned to death at Bingen, a town on the Rhine, between Mentz and Coblentz. They declared that the Pope was Antichrist; ‡ and if they died in the faith of Christ, like many of their brethren in the Alps, they are worthily numbered with the mar-

* Morland, book ii., chap. 1. † Limborch, Inquisition, chap. 18.
‡ Foxe, Acts and Monuments, book v., anno 1370.

tyrs' host. In the diocess and province of Embrun, in Dauphiny, there was "a great multitude of persons" who held the same doctrine as the Christians of Piedmont, and spread their tenets among the population. A Papal Bull was issued, requiring all Bishops, Abbots, and Clergy, the Lords, Judges, and communities, to aid the Inquisitor in cleansing that and the neighbouring provinces from the taint of heresy. Such Bulls were not usually issued until the probability that they would be executed had been ascertained; and we may therefore take it for granted that many perished in the flames, or were slaughtered by the soldiery of the Sovereigns of France and Naples, to whom also letters were addressed.* But the affairs of England now demand our most careful observation.

Although the evangelical doctrines of the Waldenses made little progress in this country at the time when those who entertained them were most numerous, and while they suffered severest persecution on the Continent, the imperishable seed of revealed truth had not lost its vitality. From the days of Aldhelm,† Englishmen had heard the word of God in Anglo-Saxon versions: long after the Norman conquest that language was but an antiquated form of the vernacular; and it must not be inferred that England had no knowledge of the holy Scriptures, because an interval of nearly three hundred years may have elapsed between the recorded dates of the last Anglo-Saxon and the first English translation. The former had not ceased to be intelligible when the latter appeared; and, independently of those works, there were earnest Preachers, and writers too, who quoted Scripture largely in the language of the people. Perhaps it is owing to this fact, under the gracious care of God, that the doctrines of our early Reformers were so near the standard by which we estimate doctrine at this day. Early in the fourteenth century ‡ an anonymous tract was circulated, bearing the title of "the Ploughman's Complaint." The document is intrinsically good, and sufficiently full to afford material for a judgment of the state of religious opinion in England at the time of its composition. Whoever the writer was, he must have been a well-informed and active opponent of the prevailing superstition, and of the pretensions of the Pope, then so unpopular in this island; for, speaking of Papal wars and curses, he observes: "Of what thing that I knowe, I may beare true witnesse." Personating a ploughman, he may be presumed to represent the sentiments entertained by many in the humbler classes of society, with whom he entirely agreed in expounding an evangelical precept to require "poorenes in spirite; but not to ben a begger," referring to the swarms of begging Friars who had risen into popularity by the profession of poverty, and then become hateful for inordinate love

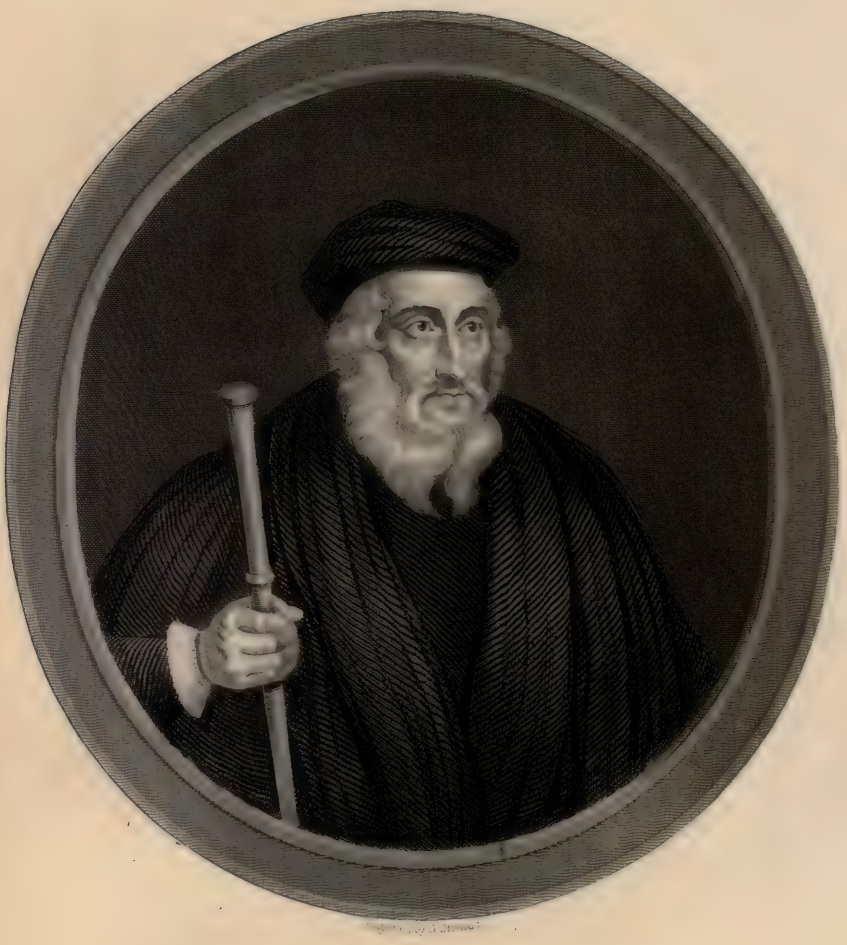
* Fleury, xcvi., 10.

† About the year 706.

‡ Foxe dates this work at 1360; but conjecturally. He altered "not many words of the phrase thereof," to make it more intelligible in his day; but even after this alteration, which extended to the more antiquated words, and therefore despoils it of some of its antiquity, the style is evidently more ancient, *far more strongly Saxon*, than that of Wycliffe, whose Bible is dated "about 1378." "The Ploughman's Complaint," therefore, presents a highly important example of English quotation and practical use of Scripture many years before Wycliffe.

of wealth and luxury. Like the author of "the Noble Lesson," * the Ploughman gives a compendium of some chief points of sacred history, and passes by the Fathers and other ecclesiastical authorities without the slightest notice, except some incidental expressions of marked rejection. He mourns for the flock of Christ, from whom wicked shepherds hide the pure water of doctrine, and give them to drink only water troubled and defouled by their feet, until there is dread that the sheep will die of thirst. He charges false Prophets with beguiling the people, taking away the worship of God, and substituting a worship of themselves. The worship of God consists, as he maintains, in loving, dreading, and trusting in God above all other things; but the Priests have broken the law of love and fear and trust. God should be prayed to absolve men from sin, as he forgave Peter and Mary Magdalene, without shrivings to Priests; and God is as mighty now as he was then. The Apostles taught not that sinners should confess to Priests, nor did they assert any power to cleanse men from the leprosy of guilt, which Christ alone can do: "for there nis but one Priest, that is, Christ, that may knowe in certaine the lepre of the soule." God ordained not that his Priests should set men penances for their sins, penances which cause them to trust in the shrift rather than in Christ's absolutions. He sorrows that people are thus led away from God, and argues, from scriptural examples, against the sale of those fictitious graces. In a strain of mingled lamentation and invective, he attacks the whole system of Monkery, and the exorbitant pride of the Clergy. The Priest forsakes a poor estate and labour, to become a lord of his brethren, and sing Latin prayers; but, "Ah! Lord!" he exclaims, "if they be thy servants, whose servants are we that cannot pray as they do? And, Lord, we laymen have a belief that thy goodness is endless; and if we keep thy commands, then are we thy true servants; and though we pray thee a little, and short, thou wilt think on us, and grant us what we need; for so thou didst promise. And, Lord, I trow that pray a man never so many quaint prayers, if he keep not thy commands, he is not thy good servant. And, Lord, our hope is, that thou wilt as soon hear a ploughman's prayer, and he keep thy commands, as thou wilt do a man's of religion, though the ploughman may not have so much silver for his prayer as men of religion. For they know not so well how to price their prayers as these other chapmen; but, Lord, our hope is, that our prayers be never the worse, though not so well sold as other men's prayers." These allusions to the custom still prevalent of selling masses, indicate more than disapprobation of that single abuse: they express a state of popular feeling that will soon be developed more distinctly. In common with other Reformers, the Ploughman inveighs against singing in churches: "They singin merelich thy words, and that singing they clepen thy service." He judges that weeping for sin is more acceptable to God than turning his words into songs. Transubstantiation is condemned at considerable length. The pretence of Priests to make Christ's body is contrasted with their wicked practices, and the setting up of mawmets, or images, in great stone

* Quoted and described at p. 494, *supra*.



Wycliffe.

houses with glass windows, there to be privily worshipped, is denounced as gross idolatry. He complains that if a layman attempts to teach the people the truth of God's words, as bounden by the commandment of charity to do, he is forbidden and imprisoned. Such observations are repeated again and again, showing that, as in the primitive church, lay-Preachers had endeavoured to edify the people; but that the Priests, unlike the men of the apostolic age, persecuted the Lord's people that were Prophets. This also will have to be borne in mind when we come to speak of those lay-Preachers who assisted Wycliffe. Opposition to the payment of tithes is also frequently expressed; an opposition which soon became prominent in the followers of that eminent man, and was inseparable from the re-action of those times against the cupidity of the Clergy, the encroachments of the Popes, and the rapacity of the nobles. The Ploughman describes the manner in which Priests proceeded against persons accused of heresy, with a minuteness that confirms the fact that although the tribunal of the Inquisition was not formally established in England, its forms were observed, in compliance with the wish of the Pope, as communicated to Edward III., (A.D. 1335,) on occasion of the discovery of some heretics in Ireland.* He objects to the canon-law, as different from that of the Old and New Testaments, and partly taken from "heathen men's laws." Frequent allusions to the sufferings of his brethren, then put in bodily thraldom, and even suffering death by fire, and to the cruelty of Priests, exceeding the severity of laymen that were Lords, exactly coincide with other evidences that even then the number of dissentients from the Church of Rome, and of confessors, perhaps also of martyrs to the truth, was far from inconsiderable.† He even speaks as if there were an open secession of persons who recognised each other as brethren, but without any Minister at their head. "But, Lord," he says, "we laymen know no God but thee, and we, with thine help, and thy grace, forsake Nebuchadnezzar, (the Pope,) and his laws." The celibacy and luxury of the Priests, and their alliance with the rich to oppress the poor, are so described within the same paragraphs, as to indicate that the seceders were generally poor persons, and the wealthy indifferent to the doctrinal corruptions of the Church.‡

Such were the dawnings of divine truth in England when it pleased God to raise up John de Wycliffe. A native of Yorkshire, and student at Oxford, he was early distinguished as a scholar, and acknowledged even by his enemies to be a skilful dialectician. With unanswerable argument he unmasked the errors of Churchmen; but the Mendicants chiefly dreaded the force of his invective. Superior to the prejudices of his age, and willing to be counted a fool for Christ's sake, he soon renounced the prospect of honours which must have been awarded to him, had he cultivated the unprofitable learning then in vogue; and he applied himself to the exposition of holy Scripture, a work which was thought beneath the dignity of a scholar by those who had been taught to esteem the traditions of men more than the

* Raynaldi Annales Ecclesiastici, an. 1335, num. 60.
† Idem, An. 1355, num. 28. ‡ Foxe, Acts and Monuments, book v., an. 1360.

revelation of God. But many there were among the laity who appreciated his diligence in teaching them the way of life, and who gave him the familiar appellation of "Gospel Doctor." In the spirit of those few predecessors to whom we have alluded, he inveighed against the avarice and hypocrisy of the begging Friars; but, having thrown himself into constant controversy with them, and profoundly studied some questions of right which were involved in the dispute between the Sovereign of England and the Pope, he gained a clearer view of the absolute supremacy of Jesus Christ over both Church and State, and of the sufficiency of the merits of the Saviour to deliver souls from death, and maintained that the word of God alone suffices to teach men the way of salvation. For several years he was supported by the temporal power, a power which he always defended against the encroachments of the Papacy; and, even when most hotly persecuted, was so far shielded from the fury of his adversaries as neither to suffer imprisonment nor death. In the heat of his earlier disputation with those Monkish beggars he was in high favour at Oxford, and received from the Master and scholars of Baliol College the living of a country parish, Fylingham,* in the diocess of Lincoln, said to have been a valuable benefice (A.D. 1361). He was then elected Warden of that College, and afterwards occupied the same station at Canterbury-Hall. Thus did members of the University of Oxford avow their respect for a man soon to be regarded as a heretic by the Bishops. He maintained and taught that the Pope had no power to exclude any one from the kingdom of heaven; but that if the power of binding and loosing were committed to sinful men, then might any simple Priest absolve even him whom the Pope had thought proper to condemn. This he enforced with no less eloquence than reason, proving it out of the Bible; and yet with so great modesty, and with such a simplicity of demeanour and purity of conversation, that his opinions took root beyond the power of the priesthood to eradicate them from the heart and mind of Englishmen. Admiring a state of true poverty as much as he abhorred the dissembling of those who professed to follow it, he went barefoot and poorly clad, as did several who associated themselves with him, and began to preach after his example. Passing from points of discipline to articles of doctrine, he became convinced that the fable of transubstantiation was contrary to God's word, and boldly declared that the host, after consecration as before, was no more than bread, yet reverently acknowledged the sacramental presence of the Saviour. Having taken away their god, he embittered the hatred of the Clergy against himself, by teaching that if Priests sinned habitually, as unquestionably they did with but few exceptions, the temporal Lord was bound, under pain of damnation, to take away their living. Affirming that the Gospel alone was sufficient to rule the life of any Christian man, he denied at once the whole system of domination over conscience by Confessors; and declaring that the divers rules by which "religious persons" were governed, added no more perfection to the Gospel than doth the white colour to the wall, he lifted the finger of scorn

* Now spelt Fillingham.

against the Monks, those whited sepulchres, whose inward corruption had become notorious. And while Popes were labouring to establish the Inquisition on this island, and Bishops did actually imprison heretics, so called, he preached that neither the Pope, nor any other Prelate of the Church, ought to have prisons wherein to punish transgressors. He even went so far as to declaim against the supremacy of the Pope, and against monasticism, as an ecclesiastical institution; and contended that tithes were pure alms, not to be exacted by any human authority, but freely given, if given at all. Many extreme opinions were laid to his charge; but although it was to have been expected that a mind suddenly emancipated from its bondage would fall into some opposite error, the colouring of fanaticism thrown over his character by Popish historians is, to say the least, considerably removed by candid examination of his writings; and it is demonstrated that eminent ecclesiastical historians have been misled in their notions of his doctrine by the false representations of Monkish writers, who published, as propositions of Wycliffe, errors and extravagances contradicted by the general tenor and express testimony of his works.* Many circumstances contributed to bring him to these bold conclusions. His predecessor in the Wardenship of Canterbury-Hall had been displaced, together with three Friars who were expelled from that foundation in consequence of their proceedings in opposition to the other Fellows, who were secular Priests, and with whom Regulars could not possibly agree. Islep, Archbishop of Canterbury, himself the founder, removed the Monk, Woodhall, and put our Reformer in his place; but no sooner did the aged Archbishop die, than Langham, his successor, restored the Monk, and ejected Wycliffe. Wycliffe appealed to the Pope, but unsuccessfully; and, after the lapse of about three years, his ejection was confirmed (A.D. 1370). But the sentence of the Pope raised him higher in the estimation of Edward III., who had already made him a royal Chaplain; and in the quarrel with Rome, that Sovereign, together with his son, John of Gaunt, the Duke of Lancaster, gladly availed themselves of the antagonist of Monkish impostors, and subject of Papal suspicion, to prosecute their cause. One year after his definitive ejection, (A.D. 1371,) when the English Parliament petitioned the King to remove Ecclesiastics from the administration of the high offices of State, which had been entirely in their hands, Wycliffe's judgment was given in favour of the measure: he was necessitated to defend himself by argument, and, in doing so, became daily more decided in dissent from Romanism. Then it was that he took his degree of Doctor of Divinity, and began to teach a reformed theology in the University of Oxford (A.D. 1372). At the same time Edward, as we have just observed, was engaged in a dispute of long standing with the Court of Rome, whose abstraction of an immense revenue from England could no longer be allowed without endangering the kingdom; a con-

* Since Lewis, his elder biographer, and Foxe, Le Bas, in his Memoir, and especially Dr. Vaughan, in his "Life and Opinions of John de Wycliffe, D.D.," and his introductory Memoir to the tracts and treatises of Wycliffe, have placed the real principles of that holy man in clear light, and enabled modern readers to judge of him for themselves.

ference was to be holden with Papal representatives by Commissioners from the King, and among them Wycliffe occupied the second place. The diplomatists met at Bruges, in Flanders, and the demand of England was for nothing less than that the Pontiff should desist, in future, from the reservation of benefices in the Anglican Church; that the Clergy should freely enjoy the right of electing their Bishops; and that Bishops thus elected should be confirmed by their own Metropolitan. Had those demands been successful, had Gregory XI. done anything better than temporize, a disciplinary reformation, and the independence of the Anglican Church, would have been the immediate consequences. Wycliffe, however, was rewarded by the King with a prebend in the collegiate church of Westbury, and with the rectory of Lutterworth, in Leicestershire, (A.D. 1375,) where he afterwards found a retreat from persecution, and leisure for the preparation of his most valuable works.

But he had yet to take part in the great quarrel between the Church of Rome and the State, and to suffer open persecution in the cause of national and Christian liberty. Utterly dissatisfied with the issue of the tedious negotiations at Bruges, which were protracted through two years, the Parliament assumed a posture of hostility to the Pope and higher Clergy; and Wycliffe, faithful to Christ and to his country, gave the full weight of his learning and eloquence to the side of justice. Thus identified with the secular power, he could not be injured by priestly adversaries, until, in consequence of the infirmities of age, the King could no longer discharge the functions of royalty, and, the Duke of Lancaster, his younger son, Regent, and friend of Wycliffe, becoming unpopular, and the court itself distracted with jealousies, the Bishops felt reviving power, and resolved to crush him, if possible. But, unable to find any occasion against him, except concerning the law of his God, they incited the Archbishop, Simon Sudbury, who had already enforced the sentence of deprivation from the Wardenship of Canterbury-Hall, and had endeavoured to put him to silence, but without effect, now to proceed against him as a heretic. Readily did he command him to appear at St. Paul's, before the Bishop of London, and other Prelates, to answer to charges of heresy. On the day appointed, the Bishops took their places in the church, a crowd of Londoners filled and surrounded the sacred building, and all waited to behold the client of royalty, the patriot Priest, the flower of Oxford, the popular Preacher that should appear as a culprit before a tribunal that acknowledged but one superior on earth, and he an alien, and one from whose rigorous jurisdiction no mortal could expect mercy. He came. But he came preceded by no less a personage than Lord Percy, Earl Marshal of England, attended by the Duke of Lancaster, the first subject in the realm, and followed by four Friars, selected for their skill in theology, to aid him, if necessary, in his defence. My Lord Percy elbowed his way through the skirts of the crowd, pressed into the thickest, with great difficulty effected an entrance into the church, and went up to the presence of the Clergy. Lancaster had encouraged Wycliffe, as they came by the way, to face his Judges boldly. The Bishops, he said, were

all unlearned in comparison with himself; and, as for the concourse of people, he and the Earl would protect him against any violence from them. Animated by his supporters, and, no doubt, trusting in God, Wycliffe kept close to the Marshal; and the company, nothing daunted, presented themselves in the Lady Mary's chapel, where sat the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, with several other Bishops, Dukes, and Barons. Disturbed by the appearance, probably unexpected, of the royal and noble protectors of the heretic, and by the stir made in the promiscuous and excited assemblage, Courtney, Bishop of London, could not conceal his impatience. As Wycliffe stood, waiting "to know what should be laid unto him," the friendly Earl bade him sit down, saying, "that he had many things to answer to, and therefore had need of some softer seat." The Bishop of London, "cast eftsoons into a fumish chafe," (as Foxe words it,) said, that he should not sit there; that it was not fitting for one to sit who was cited there to answer before his Ordinary; and haughtily commanded him to stand. The fire that had been smouldering so long, now burst forth: neither the temporal nor spiritual Lord would be beaten in hard words; and the quarrel was taken up by the people, who shouted, some in anger and others in alarm. At this moment the Duke took Lord Percy's part, and assailed the haughty Bishop with as reproachful language as he could find. The Bishop retorted, and with such mastery of words, that the Duke was fairly overpowered by a stronger torrent of railing; and, reddening with anger, threatened that he would bring down his pride, and not only his, but the pride of all the prelacy of England. Suddenly the Bishop changed his tone, and, putting on an air of forbearance, that provoked the unwelcome visiters so much the more, drew forth a menace of personal violence, and so caught the sympathy of the Londoners, that the whole company began to fear for their lives. The sequel of this affair was a riotous attack on the house of Lord Percy, who narrowly escaped death, together with Lancaster, by taking boat and going down the Thames to Kingston, where the young Prince, grandson of the King, afterwards Richard II., resided. The citizens, however, were pacified by the interposition of the Princess, his mother; and Wycliffe was no more meddled with for that time, except that a prohibition to preach the offensive doctrine was laid on him by the Bishops.

In partial obedience to their authority, he endeavoured to withhold from the public ear such propositions as were deemed heretical; but to repress the ardour of a spirit intent on reformation was impossible. The voice that for seventeen years had been raised in testimony to God's truth, could not be silenced; neither could its effects be lost. The caution of the master was not requisite in the disciples; and while Doctor Wycliffe was considering how he might best shape his future course, a multitude of "poor Priests," who had profited by his instructions, dispersed themselves all over England. Clad in threadbare russet gowns, and barefooted, having no licence from their Ordinaries, but conscious of an obligation to preach against prevalent corruptions,—possessing no benefices, nor yet receiving any stipend,—

they went forth like the first disciples, from town to town, and from county to county, preaching the Gospel, or as much of it as they knew; never without a congregation, nor ever without a welcome. In the castle of the Baron as in the cottage of the poor man, they gladly took the common fare; led conversation on the unfaithfulness of the Church, the pride of Prelates, the licentiousness of the Clergy, simony, idolatry, persecution, sinners perishing for lack of knowledge, and the nation impoverished and oppressed by Rome. The Priests raged and cursed; they threatened the itinerant innovators with canonical censure, excommunication, imprisonment, and death; but the congregations stood like centinels around the undaunted evangelists; and until the population of England should have heard their testimony, God protected them from harm. Excepting the Mendicant Friars, they were the first itinerant Preachers; and were properly so called, for they had no local charge. England was their circuit; and although they travelled but for a short time, they established a precedent to be followed again and again, sometimes by ecclesiastical direction, and sometimes under the impulse of the constraining love of Christ.* Then Papal thunder rolled over the land. Erewhile the human herd had been affrighted at the sound, and had fled for refuge to the confessional and the altar; but now Gregory XI. launched his fulminations with reiterated peal, without awakening any terror,—for the public mind was not susceptible. Men were suddenly isolated from the source of dread; and the thunderer saw his flashes wasted in empty air. To the University of Oxford, to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Simon Sudbury, to the Bishop of London, William

* The resemblance of these "poor Priests" to the Travelling Preachers who were appointed by Mr. Wesley to preach in their wide Circuits all over England, is too close to escape observation. Mr. Le Bas (chap. x.) justly observes, that Wycliffe, at the head of his poor Priests, might, in some respects, be styled the Wesley of his day. "He did not, it is true, itinerate himself, neither does it appear that he encouraged laymen to take upon themselves the office of public religious instruction. But he gave his express and deliberate sanction to the practice of itinerancy and field-preaching; though without pretending to supersede the regular and faithful ministrations of the parochial Clergy. In one particular, indeed, he had clearly the advantage of Wesley. The modern Reformer lived in times when the law and practice of the Church gave no countenance to this species of Missionary proceeding. Whereas Wiclif had constantly before his eyes the phenomenon of itinerant mendicancy, and might, therefore, think himself excused for wishing to convert to salutary purposes an usage which had the avowed sanction of Christ's Vicar upon earth." Certainly Wycliffe had always been familiar with the practice of itinerant and field preaching, and, so far, did not innovate. But both Wycliffe and Wesley had the equal advantage of understanding the higher obligation of obedience to the supreme law of Christ. Wesley never went farther in setting aside canonical restraint than did his predecessor, when he lectured the Pope on the sinfulness of holding temporal authority; nor so far as when he appealed to the secular power to support him in defiance of his ecclesiastical superiors. The conduct of Wesley was the reverse of this. Wycliffe had reasons for that procedure of which, doubtless, Wesley would have felt the force in like circumstances; but Mr. Le Bas must surely have remembered that Wycliffe encouraged his travelling Preachers to proceed, in spite of a prohibition of the Archbishop. Wesley, in his utmost zeal, could not have done more, and never did so much. Neither did Mr. Wesley encourage laymen to take upon themselves the office of public religious instruction. As lay-Preachers, they were not instituted to any ministerial office, but on some of them Mr. Wesley conferred ordination; and his successors fully recognise and act on the principle of ecclesiastical order that Mr. Le Bas inaccurately conceives the "modern Reformer" to have violated. Both Wycliffe and Wesley maintained that the law of the Church was only binding so far as it was in agreement with the law of God, that law being always acknowledged as supreme.

Courtney, again to the same Archbishop and the same Bishop, and to the young Richard II., who had by this time ascended his throne, came letters from the Fisherman of St. Peter's; and whatever zeal they quickened in the rulers of the Church, whatever fear they may have awakened in the mind of the young King and his uncles, they moved not the Commons of England; and Wycliffe again threw his energies into the work. The first Parliament under that reign assembled; and measures proposed for delivering this country from Romish exactions were the subject of anxious deliberation. "As a remedy against the evils which have hitherto resisted every influence opposed to them, it is urged that the procuring of a benefice by Papal provision shall be punished with outlaw; and that the same penalty shall be incurred by the man who farms any of the livings in the English Church that have been conferred upon foreigners. It is also urged, that the Pope shall be prevented making reservations to dignities elective, the same being done against his treaty taken with Edward III.; that all aliens, as well religious as others, avoid the realm; and that, during the war with France and Scotland, all their lands and goods shall be applied thereto." * In short, it was debated whether the Papal authority in England should be abolished, as, in effect, it would have been, and a very large amount of Church property confiscated to the State. And in order to justify such a statute, application was made for judgment to the very man who was regarded by the Clergy as at the head of a sect,† and was at that moment obnoxious to prosecution as a heretic. It was demanded of him, "Whether the kingdom of England may lawfully, in case of necessity, for its own defence, detain, and keep back, the treasure of the kingdom, that it be not carried away to foreign and strange nations, the Pope himself demanding and requiring the same, under pain of censure, and by virtue of obedience." Wycliffe, in a written answer addressed to his Sovereign, persuaded and proved the affirmative by the principles of God's law. It is, therefore, no matter of surprise that he was cited to appear again, not at St. Paul's, but at Lambeth, to answer to charges of heresy, in the presence of the same Bishops who declared that they would do "justice" on him in obedience to the Pope, without fear or favour, even if they should die for it. He obeyed the citation, went to the Archbishop's chapel at Lambeth, at the appointed time, and was expecting to be placed on his defence, when a messenger came from the Queen-mother, and commanded them not to proceed with any definitive sentence against him. Astounded and crest-fallen, they instantly submitted, and Wycliffe was again delivered.‡ But thenceforth he had less human patronage,

* Vaughan, Life and Opinions of Wycliffe, i., 360.

† "Comites unius sectæ," is the expression of Walsingham in describing his followers.

‡ Before leaving that court, Wycliffe presented a written declaration of his doctrine on points relating to the controversy between the civil and ecclesiastical powers. There is little or nothing in the eighteen conclusions therein defended, that relates to theological opinion; but his silence is accounted for by the fact, that the document was a defence of his position, not a confession of his faith, and, therefore, not a partial retractation, as some have represented.

and became less conspicuous in secular affairs, as the troubles of that unhappy reign increased. During the next three years we hear little of him. The Bishops desisted from open persecution; Gregory XI. died about the time of the summons to Lambeth; the Antipopes were too busy in contention to trouble themselves about heretics; popular discontent, and, at last, a general insurrection in England, in which the Archbishop of Canterbury was murdered, withdrew the attention of court and Parliament from the controversy with Rome; and as Wycliffe was not so much needed by his patrons, nor could so easily be persecuted by his enemies, he was left at liberty to pursue his vocation as Rector of Lutterworth, and to use his pen for the propagation of sounder doctrines. But although there is the most explicit evidence that the rebellion was excited by the wrongs of the people, who were disaffected to the higher classes, as well as alienated from the Clergy; Romish writers, both then and since, have endeavoured to blame the Reformer for an event with which he had not the slightest conscious relation. The Chancellor of Oxford then appeared against him, and threatened excommunication and imprisonment to Wycliffe and his followers, unless they would "repent and amend," as he chose to say. Against this edict he wished to appeal to the King; but the Duke of Lancaster, who had hitherto supported him, saw fit to change, and bid him submit to his Ordinary, and say nothing to the King. Thenceforth he stood alone, and devoted himself with redoubled earnestness to the study and defence of doctrinal truths. Yet his influence over the public was undiminished, and still turned to good account. A singular evidence of the effect of his teaching appeared in London, (A.D. 1381,) when the citizens, to rebuke the indifference of the Clergy to the state of public morals, somewhat rudely took the matter into their own hands, imprisoned immoral persons, or subjected them to a sort of open penance, by cutting off their hair, making them stand in market-places, or carrying them through the streets with bag-pipes and trumpets blown, "to the intent that they should be better known, and their companies avoided." In this eccentric, however well meant, proceeding, they said that they were following a suggestion of Master Wycliffe, who had encouraged them "to perpetrate the act, to the reproach of the Prelates of the Clergy." The truth appears to be, that John of Northampton, who for that year was Mayor, and a zealous follower of Wycliffe, was at the head of the movement, probably conceiving that it thus became him, as chief Magistrate, to show himself a terror to evil-doers. The last act of the Ecclesiastical authorities against him, was a summons to appear before the Convocation; but he did not think it necessary or prudent to attend. It is related, that just as the members of Convocation were assembled, and about to proceed to the censure of Wycliffe's writings, (A.D. 1382, St. Dunstan's day,) "a wonderful and terrible earthquake fell throughout all England; whereupon divers of the Suffragans, being feared by the strange and wonderful demonstration, doubting what it should mean, thought it good to leave off from their determinate purpose. But the Archbishop, (as chief Captain of that army, more rash and bold than wise,) interpreting the chance which

had happened clean contrary to another meaning or purpose, did confirm and strengthen their hearts and minds, which were almost daunted with fear, stoutly to proceed and go forward in their attempted enterprise; who then, discoursing Wycliffe's articles, not according to the sacred canons of the holy Scripture, but unto their own private affections, and men's traditions, pronounced and gave sentence, that some of them were simply and plainly heretical, other some half erroneous, others irreligious, some seditious, and not consonant to the Church of Rome." The articles being classified, ten as heretical, and fourteen as erroneous, were published with a mandate of the Archbishop, addressed to the Bishop of London, as well as to the other Bishops, enjoining them to have it admonished and warned in their cathedral and other churches, "that no man henceforth, of what state or condition whatever, do hold, teach, preach, or defend the aforesaid heresies and errors, or any of them; nor that he admit to preach any one that is prohibited, or not sent to preach, or any one else of whom there is any doubt; nor that he hear or hearken to any one preaching the said heresies or errors, or any of them; nor that he favour or adhere to him, either publicly or privily; but that immediately he shun and avoid him, as he would avoid a serpent putting forth pestiferous poison, under pain of the greater curse;" and this curse should be inflicted on the contumacious after three days' canonical monition. The Archbishop further commanded his brethren, "by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ," to be inquisitors of heretical pravity in all their cities and diocesses; thus too successfully attempting to introduce the Inquisition into England under the mitigated form of an episcopal court. The Clergy in general were quite ready to act on this mandate. By the University of Oxford, indeed,—where the doctrines taught by Wycliffe were still entertained by many, including the Chancellor, and perhaps favourably regarded by all,—it was at first resisted; but the Chancellor yielded abject submission, being awed by the threatenings of the Archbishop. But the Clergy well knew that they had no power to enforce this mandate. The law of England did not yet authorize a Bishop to imprison heretics; and as for the office of Inquisitor, it was utterly incompatible with the constitution of this country. A form of statute was therefore drawn up privately, and the signature of the young King obtained without the knowledge of the House of Commons, and entered in the statute-book, as if it had been regularly carried through that House. This counterfeit Act of Parliament set forth, that forasmuch as it was openly known that there were divers evil persons (the poor Priests of Wycliffe) within the realm, going from county to county, and from town to town, in certain habits, under dissimulation of great holiness, and without licence, preaching daily in churches and churchyards, markets, fairs, and other open places where there were great congregations of people; and that their sermons contained heresies and notorious errors, to the great emblemishing of the Christian faith, destruction of the laws and estate of the Church of England, and peril of souls, &c.:—after a long preamble in the same strain, it was said to be "ordained and asserted in this present Par-

liament, that the King's commissions be made and directed to the Sheriffs and other ministers of our Sovereign Lord the King, or other sufficient persons learned, and according to the certifications of the Prelates thereof to be made in the Chancery from time to time, to arrest all such Preachers, and also their fautors, maintainers, and abettors, and to hold them in arrest and strong prison, till they will justify themselves according to reason and the law of holy Church. And the King willeth and commandeth that the Chancellor make such commissions at all times that he, by the Prelates, or any of them, shall be certified, and thereto required, as is aforesaid." The Commons were indignant on discovering the humiliation to which they had been fraudulently made to appear a party, and in their next session (A.D. 1382) sent a petition to the King for its repeal, stating that the statute had not had their assent, and that "it was never anywise their intent to be justified to the Prelates, nor to bind their successors to be so, more than their ancestors had been in times past." The petition, or, as we should now say, the bill, received the royal assent, but was not published. The fraudulent statute, however, continued to be acted on, and passed for law until the Reformation; a perfect example of Romish truth! Having gained young Richard, they obtained from him letters patent addressed to the Archbishop, empowering him and the other Clergy, by a distinct act of royal authority, to arrest and imprison in their own prisons, if they so pleased, the Preachers of heretical doctrine, and their abettors (A.D. 1382, June 28th). From that time the persecutors had a legal pretext under which to imprison, and even put to death, reputed heretics. Then began in England the era of persecution.

But God was graciously pleased to preserve his servant, who had always trusted in Him; and the faith of Wycliffe is powerfully illustrated by the only familiar anecdote of him that has been preserved. When at Oxford (A.D. 1379) he fell sick, his life was despaired of by his friends, and a company of Friars, with some laymen of the city, went to his chamber, hoping to extort a recantation from their adversary in his last moments. They talked earnestly and at length; but he calmly lay in silence, until, suddenly rising in the bed, he exclaimed with a loud voice, "I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord." "Of the Friars," say some, and the perversion passes current; but Foxe, the first narrator, did not find the witticism in his authority; nor does it sound like the words of such a man as Wycliffe, speaking at such a time under the influence of holy confidence in his Redeemer, and must therefore be rejected. While several of his friends forsook him,—for they recanted under terror of excommunication,—he stood firm; and in the peaceful retreat of Lutterworth, preached and wrote with unabated diligence. Some of his principal treatises are said to have been composed there; but no other work could equal a translation of the entire Bible from the Latin Vulgate, which is said to have been completed while he was at Oxford, (A.D. 1378,) and with the assistance of some of his friends in that University; although others assign its publication to the year 1383, when the whole may have been completed. "By this means," says an

author of that time, "the Scripture is made common, and more clear to laymen and women who can read, than it generally has been to the most learned Clerks; and thus the pearl of the Gospel is thrown to swine, who trample it under foot, and it becomes a plaything to the people." These most learned Clerks were, after all, notoriously deficient in literary attainment; and so negligent of the word of God, that when Richard Fitz-Ralph, the celebrated Archbishop of Armagh, sent four Priests from his diocess to study divinity at Oxford, they were obliged to return to Ireland as they went, because not even a Latin Bible could be found in that place of study.* And the Clergy were so mortified at seeing the sacred volume in the hands of the laity, that they endeavoured, a few years afterwards, to get an Act of Parliament to suppress the book. They were prevented from gaining their point in the House of Lords by the opposition of the Duke of Lancaster, but carried it in the Convocation holden at Oxford in the year 1408, where it was decreed, that no one should thenceforth translate the Bible into English, nor read it in an English translation. The laborious Wycliffe, exhausted by toil, banished from Oxford, and enfeebled by the disease which his enemies hoped would have been fatal, could no longer engage in public duties with the vigour those duties demanded. A slight attack of paralysis had probably impaired his utterance, and made the assistance of a Curate necessary, when a summons came from Urban VI., requiring him to appear at the threshold of the Apostles at Rome, where the Pontiff knew that neither popular sympathy nor royal protection would cover him from the vengeance of the Church. For a grey old man, already prostrated by disease, to journey thither by land and sea, and then to endure the pitiless treatment of that court, with certainty of ending his days in a dungeon, if not at the stake, was not to be attempted; but he replied to the citation in a respectful, but faithful, epistle. Rejoicing, he said, to open and declare to every man the faith he held, but especially to the Bishop of Rome, who would most willingly confirm his faith, if true, and correct it, if erroneous; he gave his confession, to this effect:— Christ, very God and man, gave his Gospel, which is the body of God's law, and of all parts of divine revelation the most excellent. The Bishop of Rome, as Vicar of Christ, is, of all men, most bound to submit to the law of the Gospel. For the greatness of this Vicar does not consist in dignities and honours, but in an exact imitation of our Lord, who, during his pilgrimage in this world, divested himself of all worldly rule and honour. Therefore, no faithful man should follow the Pope, except as far as the Pope follows Christ, nor offend, like Peter and the sons of Zebedee, by desiring worldly honours. And, therefore, the Pope ought to "leave unto the secular power all temporal dominion and rule, and thereunto effectually to move and exhort his whole Clergy." He then offered, if he had erred in any of these points, to submit to correction, even by death, if necessity should so require. He would surely have presented himself before the Bishop of Rome, if he could labour according to his will and desire in his own person; but the Lord had other-

* Mant, History of the Church of Ireland, chap. i., sec. 3.

wise visited him to the contrary, and taught him rather to obey God than man. Finally, giving Urban credit for good dispositions and right intentions, but under an attribution of all that was evil to his advisers,—a plea which may justly be made in behalf of constitutional Princes, but can never be other than a fiction in respect to the Roman Chief Priest,—he exhorted him to amend his ways. Thus closed his personal conflict with the powers of Antichrist, and he was thenceforth free to prepare for eternity without distraction. There is no record of his inward experience; but neither is there any ill report of his daily life. His counsel to Priests had been that they should live holily, surpassing other men in holy prayer, desire, thinking, speaking, counselling, and true teaching; that God's commandments and Gospel should be ever in their mouth, to draw men from sin thereby; that their actions in private and in public should be exemplary and above reproach, example being more powerful than precept to draw rude men; and that living thus, with frugality, humility, and charity, they would be true Priests both to God and man. In the absence of a sentence to the contrary, even from the most unfriendly biographer, we might allow to the memory of so honest and simple-minded a confessor, that his exhortations exhibit the standard to which he would endeavour to attain. And there is evidence extant, that he was universally revered as a most godly and virtuous man.* It was either in the pulpit or at the altar of the parish-church of Lutterworth, that he received the stroke of death, on St. Thomas of Canterbury's day, December 29th; and on St. Silvester's day, the last day of the year 1384, he rested from his labours. The Romish historians describe with malignant pleasure the distortion of countenance, loss of speech, and trembling of the head; and will have it that he was smitten, as by an avenging angel, for having spoken blasphemously of those two saints. We leave them with their own notions of blasphemy and retribution, and rather trust that he has outflown the shafts of malice, as well as the arrows of death, and now rejoices in the paradise of God.† After more than a quarter of a century had elapsed, and the friends and followers of Wycliffe at Oxford had passed away, search was made in the University for copies of his books, which were burnt; (A.D. 1410;) but the display of enmity to his doctrine was as impotent as tardy, for those writings had been copied and circulated, not only throughout England, but in many parts of Europe. Dutch and Flemish merchantmen conveyed them to their homes, where they were read with avidity. Lombards and Florentines did the same. In Bohemia, more than in any other country, they wrought an indelible impression, and were solemnly defended by John Huss in the University of Prague (A.D. 1412). The Council of Constance (A.D. 1415) condemned articles extracted from his writings, or framed out of them

* Thorpe's examination by the Archbishop of Canterbury; Foxe, A.D. 1407.

† Foxe's Acts and Monuments, rich in documentary material; Vaughan's and Le Bas's Lives of Wycliffe; Vaughan's Tracts and Treatises, with several other sources of information, have been used in preparing this brief sketch of the father of the Reformation in England.

by its own members; and, to show greater abhorrence of a man whom they declared to have died impenitent and obstinate, they decreed that "his body and bones, if they might be discerned from the bodies of other faithful people, should be taken out of the ground, and thrown far away from the burial of any church." This notwithstanding, his remains rested there, until, in lingering obedience to a similar mandate from the Council of Sienna, (A.D. 1421–2,) hands were at last found (A.D. 1428) in Lutterworth to break the grave, take up and burn his bones, and throw the ashes into the Swift, forty-four years after their interment.

The ashes of Wycliffe were dispersed; but his spiritual descendants never became extinct. Against them persecution began to rage during his life-time, as we have already seen. John Ashton, for example, one of his poor Priests, remarkable for zeal and self-denial, is said to have died in prison, even after a retractation had been extorted from him under the influence of terror.* After the death of the master, the disciples continued to pursue their labours, and were called "Lollards," a name which was first heard as the designation of a sect early in the century, in Holland, and soon extended to all persons in that country, in Germany, and in England, who dissented from the dominant Church, and were reputed to be pious or fanatical by friends or foes. According to Mosheim, whose elaborate account of the origin of the name appears to be indisputable,† the brethren and sisters of the Cellite or Alexian order distinguished themselves in Antwerp by diligent attendance on the sick and dying during the prevalence of epidemic diseases, when the secular Clergy were afraid to enter the chambers, or to receive the dead into the churches. Some compassionate inhabitants of the city followed their example, and, like them, took care of the burials, and were accustomed to sing hymns as they proceeded towards the grave. From this custom they were familiarly called "Lollards," or "singers," from the old German word, *lullen*, *löllen*, or *lallen*, "to sing," found also in the English *lull*, "to compose to sleep by *a pleasing sound*;"‡ and the name at first given to those funebrial singers was transferred to others who, caring for the living rather than the dead, laboured to instruct the ignorant, frequently sang the praises of God, and, because of their abstinence from worldly merriment, were reputed to be sad. The epithet then became contemptuous. Instead, therefore, of giving the followers of Wycliffe his name, we shall now call them "Lollards;" and under that epithet they were universally known. During four or five years after his death, we hear of no severe persecution; but, on the contrary, it would seem that London swarmed, as they would say, with Lollards, and that the doctrines of "Lollardie" were preached in many pulpits. A sermon of that time is still extant.§ A certain learned

* This is affirmed, incidentally, by Foxe, book v., A.D. 1401, who places his imprisonment in the year 1382. Le Bas, who dislikes the poor Priests, supposes that he was reconciled.

† Mosheim, Ecclesiastical History, cent. xiv., part ii., chap. 2, *note*.

‡ Johnson.

§ There are manuscript copies in the Royal and Cambridge Libraries, and in the Bodleian. It has been repeatedly printed, and is to be found in Foxe, A.D. 1388.

Clerk, at Paul's-Cross, then the chief preaching-station in London, took for his text the words, "Redde rationem villicationis tuæ," "Give an account of thy stewardship." The parable of the labourers in the vineyard suggested the introduction. The "spiritual understanding" was represented thus. Jesus Christ the householder, Head of the household of holy Church, called men to labour therein in divers ages of the world, as in the time of the law of nature, the time of the Law and the Prophets, and the time of grace, and in all times he has called men of divers ages. The Preacher conceived of the world as comprehended in the church, and under the law of Christ; and described, under the figure of culture, the care of society intrusted to Priests, Knights, and common labourers. To each of these classes he addressed the discourse, portraying the prevalent wickedness of Priests, Magistrates, and people, in the style of one who had studied books and men with equal care, gathering authority and illustration from inspired Scripture, and the writings of the Fathers, and unveiling the sins of all classes of his hearers. He had not learned to offer mercy through faith in the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world; but preached the law in such a manner as to convince the congregation of their guilt. The unfaithful Clerk was likened to a candle newly-quenched that stencheth all the house, instead of a bright lantern; a smoke that blindeth men's eyes, instead of clean fire. The King, Prince, Mayor, Sheriff, or Justice, who had sought power for the sake of the profit, and the desire of winning worldly worship, and not for the help of the people, was shown to be a tyrant. The people also were exhorted with unsparing fidelity, reminded of the day of judgment, and of sickness, old age, and death, as the forerunners of judgment. The world, too, was said to be drawing towards its end, the night of death to be advancing, the gloom of ignorance and guilt resting, not only on the low valleys of the commonalty, but on the most elevated portions of society, on "the high tops of spiritual dignity," where there should be some light, if any yet remained, showing the near approach of the world's night, and the coming of God in vengeance. Abbot Joachim, and Hildegard, the maiden Prophetess, had foretold the doom; and although the Preacher did not presume to say at what day or hour it would be consummated, he gathered from "the book of secrets," (the Revelation,) and from the history of the church, that the sixth seal was open, and the word of St. John fulfilled as to the "four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree." Those four angels he interpreted to be the devil's ministers, that, for the pleasure of their Lord, Antichrist, stopped the four winds, the four Gospels from being preached, and so kept the breath of the grace of the Holy Ghost from falling upon men mourning for sin, from calling them to amendment, and from quickening those that would increase in virtue. Then, as if in a prophetic rapture, he described the opening of the books of conscience, and of doctrine, so long closed, and the gathering of men together before the bar of God, and, raising his voice, denounced a triple woe on the trembling

multitude. And then, said he, "when these damned men bee in this woe, they shullen sing this reuful song, that is ywritten in the booke of mourning,—

'The joy of our hart is a go,
Our quiet is turned into woe,
The crowne of our heade is fallen us fro!
Alas, for sinne that we have doe!'

But joye and joye and joye to them that be saved!" Profound was the impression produced by this sermon of Thomas Wimbelden, and the excitement spread far and wide as copies were multiplied and distributed. People thought that indeed the end of all things was at hand. The Lollards were not less active in England than the Flagellants had been in Germany; but instead of bodily discipline, they endeavoured to arouse men's consciences to dread of sin, and the endeavour was not made in vain. One thing alone was wanting,—a clear exhibition of Christ the Saviour of sinners by faith in his blood, the truth which gave completeness and permanence to the Reformation of the sixteenth century, and would have given an entirely different character to that of the fourteenth. The undeniable defect of English Lollardism was its falling short of the true end of religious excitement. Earnest and even pious men were so intent on demolishing the fabric of Romanism, as to be sometimes diverted from building up the church of Christ, and were betrayed into the indulgence of party-spirit, when they ought to have been occupied in the work of turning sinners from the error of their way. But as the Lollards had their failings, so have many who profess to write their history, and spare no pains to cover their memory with contempt; who borrow the misrepresentations of Walsingham and Knyghton, and injuriously describe them as coarse, hypocritical, and cowardly fanatics. William Swinderby, a Priest of the diocess of Lincoln, is one of those who has been honoured most largely with Monkish contumely. He was presented before the Bishop of Lincoln, and examined in the cathedral as to a string of articles perversely extracted from his writings. His accusers were a company of Friars, representing three distinct orders, and attended by a crowd of brothers, who brought dry wood on their shoulders to burn him. Surrounded by those ferocious zealots, and overawed by the menaces of the Bishop and his assessors, he submitted to do penance, and swear to a form of revocation which they put into his hand, renouncing conclusions and articles attributed to him, and promising never to teach, preach, or affirm publicly or privily the same, nor to preach within the diocess of Lincoln without a licence from the Bishop. Stung with remorse, he soon left that diocess, and removed to the county of Hereford, where he was again persecuted; but, instead of yielding as before, answered to the articles alleged against him, and explained, justified, or denied them as they severally required. Within that county he preached incessantly; but refused to appear before his persecutors, and was therefore pronounced to be a heretic, and excommunicated (A.D. 1391). Despite the excommunication, the people favoured him; he appealed to the King and his Council, and sent a letter to the Nobles and Burgesses of Parliament,

soliciting their attention to the truths for which he suffered. Richard afforded him no redress; but issued a writ to the Sheriff and others for his apprehension and imprisonment. Still he remained at large. Walter Brute, a layman, and Stephen Bell, described as a learned man, openly espoused his cause; and were, like him, both persecuted and protected during the reign of Richard, who strove to please the Bishops; the Parliament, however, being hostile to the high pretensions of the Clergy, who could do no more than terrify the weaker Lollards into submission, and make them do penance. One of those sorry triumphs is described by Archbishop Courtney, (Nov. 17th, 1389,) as it was to be exhibited in the city of Leicester, in the persons of one William Smith, with Roger Dexter, and Alice Dexter his wife. These three involuntary penitents were to be restored to the bosom of holy Mother Church after public humiliation thus performed. William was to carry an image of St. Catherine, Roger and Alice each a crucifix, in their right hands, and in their left hands each one of them a taper of wax, weighing half a pound. The men in shirts and breeches, and Alice in her chemise alone, were to walk before the procession of the collegiate church of the Newarks at Leicester, and thrice during the procession were to bow their knees and kneel devoutly, reverently to kiss the said images, and then entering the church to stand, during mass, with the images and crosses in their hands. Then, on the following Saturday, they were to stand in the full and public market-place barefoot, bareheaded, with no more clothing than on the Sunday, devout and reverent withal, holding the images and tapers, and kissing the images with reverential genuflexion thrice. On the following Sunday the same penance was to be done in their own parish-church, and they should receive, during the mass on those days, as a mark of special clemency, permission to wrap cloaks around them, but so that the feet were still bare, lest peradventure they should take hurt by standing so long naked during cold November and December days. Holy Church! The men of Leicester must have adored thee for thy clemency; and specially honest Roger Dexter's heart must have glowed in filial affection towards thee, now reconciled, as he saw his wife Alice, weary, ashamed, shivering, with her bare feet on the cold pavement of his parish-church! But the penitential discipline of those days was not less ridiculous than cruel. "Ignorance, the mother of error, had so much blinded and deceived certain persons, to wit, Hugh Pennie, John Forstall, John Boy, John Wanderton, William Hayward, and John White, tenants of the Lord of Wingham," that when this same William Courtney, Archbishop of Canterbury, came to his palace on Palm-Sunday even, (A.D. 1390,) those farmers did not send waggons laden with hay and straw for the horses of his retinue, as bound by the tenure of their land; but sent it in privily, in bags and sacks, in derogation of the right and title of the see of Canterbury. Courtney's ingenuity covered his insulted honour; and before the procession on Palm-Sunday those six farmers marched, bare-legged from toe to knee, and heads uncovered, each carrying a sack of straw, the mouth of the sack being open, that the straw, hanging out, might tell

the nature of their delinquency. As yet, however, the Parliament of England had not been humbled by the enactment of any act that would place the lives of Englishmen at the mercy of Priests.* That indignity was reserved to the reign of the usurper, Henry IV.†

Meanwhile the Pope grew sorely dissatisfied with the Prelates of the Church in England because of their negligence and sluggishness, as he was pleased to say, in not courageously addressing themselves to the extirpation of heresy, and despatched two Bulls of equal date (Sept. 17th, 1395) to the King, and to the Bishop of Hereford; according to which documents it evidently appears that the new Preachers ranged over the country with little restraint, and were so far supported by popular sympathy, in most places, that the Diocesans could not prevail against them. He therefore required, exhorted, and besought his princely Highness to enjoin the Magistrates more straitly to execute justice against those "damned men;" to expel, banish, imprison them, and keep them imprisoned, *until condign sentence should pronounce them worthy to suffer punishment*, or, in other words, to be burnt to death. As these Bulls were on the way hither, the King was in Ireland, and the spirit of England was aroused more than ever against the Church of Rome. Twelve conclusions were presented to the House of Commons, where theological matters were not unfrequently discussed, tending to establish that the Roman Church was only a step-mother of the Anglican; that the priesthood, as it then was, was not such as the Apostles had ordained; that Monkery and transubstantiation were sinful and idolatrous; that the Pope should have no temporal power; and that the whole system of worship and sacraments was unscriptural. The multitude of arts used in this realm was also censured as unnecessary and wasteful; and it is worthy of observation that the same dislike of art and luxury prevailed amongst all the dissentients from Popery throughout Europe in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, arising, perhaps, from their exclusive possession by the Clergy and the aristocracy, who were alike devoid of sympathy with the humbler classes of the laity. Yet these conclusions were strongly supported in Parliament by some of the nobles; and the friends of Romanism, alarmed at the unprecedented boldness of the Lollards, and their growing influence, sent over to Ireland to entreat Richard to return. He did so, and on reaching England summoned those noblemen into his presence, and even made one of them swear not to favour or defend such opinions any more. "And I swear," said he, "to thee, that if thou dost ever break thine oath, thou shalt die for it a shameful death." Still the Lollards multiplied: their principal idea of humbling the Church of Rome was popular; and even Richard wrote a letter to the Pope, Boniface IX., exhorting him to cease from struggling with his antagonist for lordship over the Church, in language which might have been dictated by a Lollard (A.D. 1398).

* It will be remembered that what passed for a Parliamentary Statute only went to imprisonment of heretics. And that counterfeit statute, although still acted on, had been disclaimed and repealed by the Commons, with the sanction of the King.

† This brief notice of the Lollards is gathered from the Acts and Monuments preserved by John Foxe, compared with the records of Raynaldus, Rymer, &c.

We now enter on the reign of Henry IV. (A.D. 1399.) He soon obtained a great advantage over his subjects by the suppression of a revolt. The throne was not his; but in the usurpation of it the high Clergy were his abettors, and he gratified them by engaging the Parliament to pass a law, enacting that any heretic refusing to abjure, or relapsed, and delivered over to the secular arm by the Bishop, or his Commissaries, should be burnt alive by the civil Magistrate before the whole people.* Nothing more was necessary to complete the horrid ceremonial of Popery in England, nor could the humiliation of England be more abject, nor the power of an inexorable and sanguinary priesthood over the lives of Englishmen be more assuredly established. Only a victim was wanting whose pyre should serve as a beacon to warn the nation of a vengeance that would consume whomsoever should dare to dispute the authority now to be made paramount over Scripture, conscience, and humanity. Many, seeing the danger which had come suddenly to view, and astounded at the prospect, abjured; many had saved themselves, for the time, by keeping silence. Yet for the Lord there were witnesses, and a victim was soon found, to be the proto-martyr of England. William Sautre, (or Chatris,) parish Priest of St. Margaret's of Lynn, in Norfolk, and of Tilney, a parish in the neighbourhood, known to preach against the worship of images, the adoration of the cross, and transubstantiation, had been cited to appear before the Bishop of Norwich, and in his presence had been terrified into recantation of his opinions (April and May, 1399). "In a certain chamber within the Manor-House of the said Bishop," at South Helingham,† the Prelate himself, his Archdeacon, John de Derlington, a Canonist; Friar Walter Dish, and John Rikinghal, Professors of Theology; and William Carlton, Doctor of Civil and Canon Laws, with two Notaries, had "Sir William" into their presence, and required him to answer to the articles alleged against him. Two days were spent in disputation; threatenings were not usually spared; and although not recorded, since no record but their own remains to disclose the proceedings of that court, they were no doubt resorted to in this case. After two days of close contest, and seventeen more of anxiety and suspense, his confidence gave way; and then, in the chapel of the Manor-House, he took his oath upon a book, in the presence of the Bishop and of a congregation of the villagers, that from that time forward he would never preach, affirm, or hold, privily or openly, the heretical conclusions; and that he would solemnly renounce them in the parish churches of Lynn and Tilney, and such other places as the Bishop might appoint. "Then, next after this, upon the 25th day of May, in the year of our Lord aforesaid, in the church-yard of the chapel of St. James, within the town of Lynn, the aforesaid William, in the presence of the aforesaid Bishop and Clergy, and the people of the said town of Lynn standing round about, publicly declared in the English tongue" that the obnoxious conclusions were erroneous and heretical. The same ceremony was exhibited in the

* 2 Henry IV., chap. vii., happily expunged from our statute-books.

† The three parishes of Ellingham, in Norfolk, are now otherwise distinguished; they are Ellingham, and Great and Little Ellingham.

BURNING PLACE IN SMITHFIELD.

church of St. John's hospital in the same town, as no doubt at Tilney also. He was deprived of his office of Confessor in that diocess, and, for some reason not known, removed to London, and became parish Priest of the church of St. Osyth, then standing in Size-Lane. But his conviction of the sinfulness of image-worship and the mass deepened; he could not conceal the truth; and being known as a Lollard, and marked as one that had relapsed, was just such a subject as Arundel, the Archbishop of Canterbury, was pleased to find ready for his purpose. Threatened with death, he appealed to the Parliament to be heard at their bar in justification of himself, and "for the commodity of the whole realm." But the Parliament no longer represented the realm. Its independence was crushed. It could not now protect life. The Archbishop called him into his own presence, and he appeared before him in the Chapter-House; but after one sitting, Arundel repaired to the Parliament, there to watch that House, and left a deputy to go through the formalities of a mock trial. These accomplished, the Primate set his hand to a sentence, which declared Sautre to be a heretic, and a heretic to be punished. A few days afterwards my Lord of Canterbury took the Bishop's chair in St. Paul's, attended by six Bishops, performed on Sautre the tedious process of degradation in the presence of the multitude, put a coloured cap on his head, and handed him over, as a layman, to the High Constable and Marshal of England there present, with other civil authorities, "beseeching them that they would regard favourably the said William, unto them thus recommended." But that *recommendation* was the established form in which Inquisitors on the Continent demanded of the civil authorities that they should put heretics to death; to burn the body being considered as a deed of mercy to the soul. This was done accordingly, by virtue of an order bearing the royal signature, and ready written, being of equal date with the sentence of degradation (Feb. 26th, 1401). He was forthwith committed to the flames in Smithfield, being the first person judicially put to death for Christ's sake in this country.* It must be observed, that when standing before his Judges in the Chapter-House, he attempted not any defence, neither denied nor qualified any of his opinions, but meekly smiled with acquiescence in the will

* As this is the first writ for burning a heretic that was issued by a King of England, was the model of all that followed, and is exceedingly characteristic of those by whom it was dictated, a translation (excepting the preamble) may be interesting. "We therefore, keeper (*zelator*) of justice, and preserver (*cultor*) of the Catholic faith, desiring to maintain and defend Holy Church, and the rights and liberties of the same, and to extirpate heresies and errors of this kind out of our kingdom of England, and to punish heretics thus convicted with condign animadversion; and bearing in mind that heretics of this kind, convicted and condemned in the aforesaid form, ought, according to divine and human law, canonical institutes, and, in this part, customarily, to be burned with burning of fire: We command you as strictly as possibly we can, and firmly enjoin, that ye cause the aforesaid William (Sautre), who is now in your custody, in some public and open place, within the liberty of the aforesaid city, (London,) the cause above recited being published before the people, to be committed to fire, and himself in the same fire to be really burned, in detestation of such a crime, and for a manifest example to other Christians. And this, at your peril, you will not fail to do. Given at Westminster, the King being witness, on the 26th day of February."—Rymeri Fœdera, tom. viii., p. 178.

of God. That smile was registered as a sign of derision and contempt.*

During nine years following the Prelates did not venture to burn another Lollard. Even Arundel, first in murderous zeal, as well as in worldly dignity, found it necessary to repress his passion, and impose no other penalty than imprisonment on those who could not be moved by intimidation, or by promises, to swear unlimited submission to the authority of the Church. The poor Priests of Wycliffe still prosecuted their labours, welcomed by the common people, and often concealed by them from the knowledge of persecutors. But many persons, both Priests and laymen, without favour shown to age or sex, were wearied into recantation by the dread or the suffering of incarceration in loathsome dungeons; and many others perished in such places. This state of things continued until the year 1409, when the Primate and his Clergy renewed their efforts. A set of Constitutions of his, then issued, conveyed through the province of Canterbury his command, that no person unlicensed should preach, under penalty of excommunication and confiscation of all his goods; that no Clergyman or other person should admit an unlicensed Preacher into church, church-yard, or any other place, under penalty of interdict on the place. The Preacher who scandalized his hearers by too great freedom of speech, was to be sharply punished by the Ordinary, who might use unlimited discretion. A breath of dissent from authorized doctrine respecting the sacraments, brought down excommunication; a second utterance of the kind was to be visited with confiscation of goods, but might be atoned for by penance and open recantation. Schoolmasters were to refrain from teaching anything contrary to what was called "catholic faith," and to prevent their pupils from expounding or disputing about the words of Scripture; every negligent Schoolmaster should be "grievously punished" by the Ordinary of the place, as a favourer of errors and schisms. Wycliffe's books were to be excluded from schools, halls, hospitals, until expurgated by twelve censors then appointed; and transgressors were to be dealt with as sowers of heresy. Under the same penalty, no man should dare to translate the text of holy Scripture into English or any other tongue, or read any such book, libel, or treatise, set forth in the time of Wycliffe, or since. Formal propositions, even if but apparently repugnant to authorized doctrine, and sayings unfavourable to image-worship, pilgrimages, crossings, holy-water, and other like superstitions, were marked as criminal, and were to be avenged according to the laws against heresy. No Chaplain should be admitted to say mass in any diocess, of whom it should not be duly certified that he was untainted by any suspicion of having favoured the new doctrines; otherwise both he and he that suffered him should be "sharply punished." Because Oxford was defiled with "the new and damnable name of Lollardy," and the students' teeth were set on edge by eating the sour grapes left there by their predecessors,—those sour grapes, the writings of Wycliffe; the heads of houses were instructed how to make inquisition of heresy, or, failing

* Foxe, Acts and Monuments.

MARTYRDOM OF JOHN BADBY.

obedience, to be deprived and excommunicated. On that Constitution Foxe pithily notes in the margin: "I would the like were used now, for the banishment of Papistry." Suspected Clerks were to be made incapable of preferment for three years. And, finally, for the easier punishment of offenders, all persons not appearing on citation before the Ordinary, or other superior, should be presumed guilty, and dealt with accordingly.* The zeal of the Clergy was necessarily quickened, and the Church appeared more terrible than ever, domineering over all speech and all thought, except where the spirit of Christ had set men free from the fear of man. There were a few thus emancipated; and, among them, John Badby, a tailor of Evesham, in the diocess of Worcester, was found ready to surrender his life for Christ's sake. We find him first at Worcester, in the chapel of the charnel-house of St. Thomas (à Becket) the Martyr, in the cathedral. The Bishop of Worcester sat as his chief Judge, attended by the Prior and Sub-Prior of the Church, and a full company of "Parsons," Friars, Knights, and Esquires, chosen for their learning and rank, to give a shadow of credit to the prosecution. The Evesham tailor stood manfully before them, and, in the course of a "diligent" examination conducted by the Bishop, answered without hesitation, that it was impossible for any Priest to make the body of Christ, and that he would never believe it until "he saw manifestly the like body of Christ to be handled in the hands of the Priest upon the altar, in his corporal form;" but if that body could so be made, any good man might do it as well as a Priest. And he argued against the mass with a severity so unsparing, that the Friars exclaimed that his words were horrible and out of order. The "reverend father" admonished him to abjure utterly that heresy, and to believe all other things, as the holy mother the Church believed; but the good man was nothing moved, and said expressly, that "he would never believe otherwise than before he had said, taught, and answered." That was enough. The company were not troubled with discussion of any more articles. Thomas of Worcester subscribed an accusation of him as a heretic, two Notaries set their hands and seals to the document, and it was forwarded, forthwith, to the Primate. The Commons of England were not insensible to the condition of the tailor of Evesham. The abbey of that town, alone, endowed so richly, that it was in itself a principality, might have suggested the measure that they resolved on taking. The country was impoverished by the diversion of its wealth from the State to the Church, and they renewed the complaint, already so often, but so ineffectually, made. The Parliament, therefore, sent up a petition to the King, containing, by way of preamble, a calculation of the value of property wasted by Ecclesiastics, to the amount of 322,000 marks annually for the Priests, and 105,000 for the Friars, and asking for the impropriation of that wealth to secular use.† The

* These Constitutions, published by Foxe, may be found in the appendix to Lyndwood's Provincial, at the year 1408.

† The comparative value of these 427,000 marks may be conjectured from the fair income of a Knight being 100, of an Esquire 40, and of a Priest 7 marks per annum, according to the same preamble.

King answered, that he would consider of the matter, but did no more. But they also petitioned that such persons as might be arrested by force of the statute made against the Lollards nine years before, might be bailed, and freely clear themselves; and that none but the civil authority might be allowed to arrest them, nor any havoc be made of their goods. This would have delivered Badby out of the hands of the Bishop of Worcester; but the King gave no answer; and in a few weeks the confessor was taken up to London, and presented to Arundel, not at St. Paul's nor Lambeth, but in a monastery of the preaching Friars; and, as before, and like Sautre in the Bishop's Manor-House, not in open court. Their failure in the case of Wycliffe, for want of the like precaution, could not have been forgotten. There (March 1st, 1410) the inexorable Archbishop, assisted by the Archbishop of York, eight Bishops, the Duke of York, the Chancellor of England, the Clerk of the Rolls, and a great number of other Lords, heard the record of the meeting at Worcester, received the accusation of the Bishop, who, however, was not present, and asked Badby whether he would renounce and forsake those conclusions. It was a question of life or death. The humble tailor stood alone before the rulers of the kingdom; men who held the Sovereign himself in their hands. No John of Gaunt protected him. No Earl Marshal bade him sit down. No shout from a sympathizing multitude, nor any message from royalty, demanded justice, or interposed authority. To remonstrate, to argue, to implore, would have been vain. He might have denied the truth: yet by seeking to save his life he would have lost it; therefore, mindful of his Master's command and promise, he calmly accepted the alternative, and said, in few words, that to his life's end he would never retract the same. That answer sealed his doom; but "his countenance was stout and his heart confirmed:" Canterbury pronounced him an incorrigible heretic, and, as usual, very instantly desired the temporal Lords there present, that they would not put John Badby to death, nor deliver him to be put to death. Nor did they. The Archbishop and the Bishop of London agreed together that he should be kept safe, and sent him to a cell in the same monastery; the Archbishop took the key into his own charge; and on the following Wednesday,* arrangements being complete, re-assembled the Prelates and nobles in St. Paul's, brought up Badby again, read over the proceedings, repeated the demand for retractation, heard his determination never to retract repeated, reiterated the anathema, and sent him back in custody to the Black Friars. In the afternoon the King issued a writ for burning the heretic, and he was instantly taken to Smithfield, where preparations were made for executing the sentence. He was chained to a stake, with dry wood underneath a sort of grating at the foot, and a large barrel, open at both ends, put over him, to hide the burning sacrifice from the eyes of Englishmen, not yet accustomed to look on such objects. The fire was not yet kindled, and while the executioners waited for the Priests, whose presence was deemed necessary at so religious and important a solemnity, the Prince of Wales, a young man of twenty, capable of

* The trial, if it may be so called, took place on a Saturday.

humane and generous emotions, notwithstanding habits of great profligacy, was on the ground, went up to the spot, had the barrel removed, essayed to save him during a long conversation, uttering in one breath the kindest expressions of compassion, and in another the most boisterous threatenings; but it was all in vain. Then came Courtney, Chancellor of Oxford, and preached to him the faith of holy Church, but still without effect. Then the Prior of St. Bartholomew's in Smithfield came in procession, with the host, preceded by twelve torches, showed him the wafer, and asked him if he believed in it. "I know," he replied, "that it is hallowed bread; but it is not God's body." At this word the barrel was put over him, and the fire kindled underneath. When the martyr felt the fire, he cried, "Mercy!" The Prince, thinking the prayer such an one as he could answer, commanded the fire to be quenched, and the barrel taken off; asked him if he would forsake heresy, and return to holy Church; and offered him, under that condition, a yearly stipend from the King's treasury. But he was unmoved; and the Prince, offended, ordered the barrel to be replaced, and the flames re-kindled. It was done, and the martyr was translated into paradise (March 5th, 1410). It was impossible that the deed of that evening should not excite horror throughout England, and the Priests were therefore placed on their defence. But the King had commanded it, they could say, and the like had been done before, under the Act of 1401. That Act, which Henry had just refused to repeal, was read in Convocation five days afterwards; and the Crown, the Church, and the nobility being all on the side of persecution, the Lollards could find no human succour.

Ostensibly to deliberate on a reformation of discipline, but really to prosecute the suppression of Lollardism, the Primate assembled a national Synod at St. Paul's (A. D. 1413). Reports of the Inquisitors of heretical writings were laid before the Synod, and information was collected of the proceedings of the Lollards, whose numbers multiplied throughout the land; and the hierarchy of England felt bold to strike higher than they had hitherto presumed. Sir John Oldcastle, Earl of Cobham, was either known or suspected to have originated bills for reducing the temporalities of the Church in two Parliaments,* and had openly espoused the cause of evangelical truth. If the law against heresy could be inflicted on him, the Priests imagined that their triumph would be great; and Arundel himself went to the young King, who, when Prince of Wales, had seen Badby burnt, to solicit permission to indict Lord Cobham on a charge of heresy. Henry felt unwilling to offend the nobility by giving a hasty sanction to such a proceeding; desired the Archbishop to wait until he should have conversed with Cobham, and endeavoured to bring him to submission; and, having summoned his Lordship into his presence, earnestly admonished him to submit to his mother, holy Church, and, as an obedient child, acknowledge himself to be in error. The Christian nobleman had counted the cost of his confession, and instantly addressed the King in such words as these: "You, most worthy Prince, I am always prompt and willing to obey; forasmuch as I know

* 18 Richard II., and 11 Henry IV.

you to be a Christian King, and the appointed minister of God, bearing the sword to the punishment of evil-doers, and for safeguard of them that be virtuous. Unto you, next my eternal God, I owe my whole obedience, and submit thereunto, as I have ever done, all that I have, either of fortune or nature, ready at all times to fulfil whatever ye shall, in the Lord, command me. But touching the Pope and his spirituality, I owe them neither suit nor service; forasmuch as I know him, by the Scriptures, to be the great Antichrist, the son of perdition, the open adversary of God, and the abomination standing in the holy place." Henry, finding his influence no greater than it had been with the martyr in Smithfield, angrily gave him up, and granted full authority to the Archbishop to proceed against him. Then the chief sumner of my Lord of Canterbury appeared before the gate of Cowling Castle to summon the Earl into his master's presence; but the man's courage failed him; and not daring to enter the gates of so noble a person without licence, he returned home without delivering his message. Accompanied, however, by the door-keeper of the King's Privy Chamber, who pretended to be sent with a verbal order from the Sovereign, he came back to Cowling, and delivered the summons; but Lord Cobham refused to acknowledge the competence of any Ecclesiastic to cite him thus. Letters citatory were then nailed to the gates of Rochester Cathedral, but the people tore them down; and he, expressing a just contempt of their proceedings, went to ask an audience of the King, and presented a written confession of his faith. But Henry was inexorable; and, after a second interview, commanded him to be imprisoned in the Tower of London, in order to answer at the ecclesiastical tribunal. From the Tower he was carried to the Chapter-house of St. Paul's, (September 23d, 1413,) and informed by Arundel, at whose side were the Bishops of London and Winchester, and some other Doctors, that he had been convicted of heresy and excommunicated, but might even then find mercy if he would recant, and ask to be absolved. Scorning controversy, yet ready to give an answer of the hope that was in him, he drew a paper from his bosom, containing a brief statement of his belief respecting the sacrament of the eucharist, penance, (which he described as penitence before God,) images, and pilgrimages, so drawn up as to exhibit only so much on those points as consists with the word of God; but the confession was inadmissible by the Prelates, because it tacitly excluded Popish innovations. After talking, aside, with his assessors, Arundel called him up again, acknowledged that the confession was good as far as it went, but demanded his opinion on other points not therein mentioned. Such interrogatories he would not answer; and, after long conversation, declared that he would stand to his written confession, and to no other, until death. Gladly would he believe and observe whatever Christ's holy church had determined, and what God willed; but as for the Pope of Rome, with his Cardinals and Prelates, he would not affirm that they had lawful power to determine such matters as stood not thoroughly with the word of God. If they would send him their determination in writing, he would consider it, but would not be ensnared in oral controversy. Sir Robert

Morley, Lieutenant of the Tower, took him back thither, and the next day, Sunday, a paper was sent to him containing four articles of Romish faith, with the question, "How believe ye this article?" or, "How feel ye this article?" attached to each. In his belief and feeling of Christian verity he stood unmoved: the day was passed in prayer and resignation to God, at whose mercy-seat he freely offered up his life, and sought help from the Holy Spirit to bear a faithful testimony to the doctrines of the Gospel. On the Monday he was again hurried from the Tower, not to the Chapter-house, but to the church of the Dominican monastery, where Badby had been condemned, and found himself before the same Judges as before, with the addition of the Bishop of Bangor, and a large company of select Ecclesiastics, with Notaries to make a record of what should be said or done. The Archbishop opened the proceedings by addressing him in such words as these: "Lord Cobham, ye be advised, I am sure, of the words and process which we had unto you upon Saturday last past, in the Chapter-house of Paul's, which process is too long to be rehearsed again now. I said unto you then, that you were accursed for your contumacy and disobedience to the holy Church, thinking that ye should with meekness have desired your absolution." With a cheerful meekness the noble prisoner replied: "God said by his holy Prophet Malachy, 'Maledicam benedictionibus vestris.'" At hearing these words, "I will curse your blessings," Arundel made as though he heard not, and continued to proffer absolution, and urge him to ask for pardon. Then said the Lord Cobham, "Nay, forsooth, will I not. I never yet trespassed against you, and therefore I will not do it." Then, kneeling on the pavement, he raised both his hands towards heaven, and said, "I shrive me here unto thee, my eternal, living God, that in my frail youth I offended thee, O Lord, most grievously, in pride, wrath, and gluttony, in covetousness, and in uncleanness. Many men have I hurt in mine anger, and done many other horrible sins; good Lord, I ask thee mercy." Weeping with contrition, not with cowardice, he rose on his feet, and with a loud voice addressed the people who filled the place: "Lo, good people, lo! for the breaking of God's law, and his great commandments, they never yet cursed me; but for their own laws and traditions, most cruelly do they handle both me and other men; and therefore both they and their laws, by the promise of God, shall be utterly destroyed." As God heard the prayer, so did the people respond to the appeal; a murmur expressive of compassion rose in the congregation, the Bishops and their company were overawed, even Arundel was abashed, and, for a few moments, betrayed embarrassment by an ungraceful effort after exculpation. However, he soon rallied, and a long dispute followed on the articles sent to Lord Cobham on the preceding day, throughout which the prisoner displayed an immeasurable superiority to his accusers. At the close, the Archbishop repeated the demand of submission; and Cobham said expressly, "I will no otherwise believe in these points than what I have told you here before. Do with me what you will." A sentence, ready prepared, was then read by Arundel, declaring him to be a heretic, and another

consigning him to the temporal power to be put to death. When the reading was finished, he briefly exhorted the people to beware of those blind guides, knelt down again and prayed aloud that God would forgive his persecutors, and was forthwith reconducted to the Tower. The secular power, however, durst not precipitate the burning of such a man as Lord Cobham, whom every one respected, and whom many thousands loved and venerated as a holy man. His friends, too, circulated a short statement of his faith in regard to the eucharist, in order to counteract the tales of his enemies; but Priests were employed by their Superiors to circulate a report that he had recanted. They even exhibited an abjuration forged in his name, hoping to make him pass for a penitent, and save themselves the disgrace and danger of putting him to death. That expedient failed; but another was found. The Clergy presented a complaint to the King, that in every quarter of the realm, by reason of Wycliffe's opinions, and the said Lord Cobham, were wonderful contentions, rumours, tumults, uproars, confederations, dissensions, divisions, differences, discords, harms, slanders, schisms, sects, *seditions*, perturbations, perils, *unlawful assemblies*, variances, stripes, *fightings*, *rebellious agitations*, and *daily insurrections*. They complained that the Church was hated, (as well it might be,) and its dignitaries, Ministers, and sumners, (constables or familiars,) everywhere despised, and laughed to scorn. All spiritual jurisdiction, they said, was had in utter contempt, and all that was good come to nought. The truth seems to be that the Lollards persevered in preaching and in worship. They had schools of their own, wrote books, which were read by zealous persons who could not preach, in companies of such as could not read, had their own forms of praise, like the old Waldenses, and met together like them in fields, forests, and caves, when driven from houses. A few persons were committed to the Tower; and Henry, with an affectation of magnanimity, published a general pardon of those who had been betrayed by the subtle enemy of mankind into error, and had gone so far as to plot the death of himself, and certain Lords spiritual and temporal. But he excepted from the pardon John Oldcastle, (Lord Cobham,) Richard Colfox, William Parchemyner, Robert Shene, Clerk, Thomas Drayton, Rector of Drayton-Beauchamp, in Lincolnshire, John Hoper, Thomas Sernes—, (the name is incomplete,) Thomas, younger son of Robert Cheyne, Thomas Eston, a merchant of London, and another, as well as some who had sought refuge in sanctuaries, or were elsewhere imprisoned on the same account, or had escaped from prison, or were out on bail.* Thus, it would seem, most of the leading Lollards were within the grasp of their persecutors, in one way or another; and, this point being gained, the King summoned a Parliament, which met at Leicester, (April 30th, 1414,) and therein gave the Priests a statute setting forth that whosoever should read the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue should forfeit land, cattle, body, life, and goods from their heirs for ever; and so be condemned as heretics to God, enemies to the Crown, and most arrant traitors to the land. Persons

* Rymeri Fœdera, tom. ix., pp. 119, 120.

accused of "Wycliffe's learning" were to have no privilege of sanctuary, and, when taken, were to be first hanged as traitors to the King, and then burnt as heretics. Pardon was extended to a few, who probably submitted to the Church.* Many suffered cruel death, many fled into Germany, Bohemia, France, Spain, and Portugal; and many hid themselves in remote and uncultivated parts of Scotland, Wales, and Ireland. Their flight was in winter; a circumstance at which the mass-Priest would, no doubt, be all the better pleased.

There is some indistinct, yet undoubted, account of several persons having been previously burnt in the month of January (1414); and on the 20th of February, Arundel himself was called to answer for his deeds. His death-stroke was sudden. Like Wycliffe, he suffered paralysis, a visitation which should suffice to silence those Papistical writers who mark the affliction of the Reformer as if it were the effect of God's displeasure. But Arundel had missed the pleasure of numbering Lord Cobham with his victims. In a Parliament holden at Westminster, (January 10th, 1414,) that eminent Lollard was charged with a treasonable conspiracy against the King, a charge which careless or hostile historians have copied into their books; but which is utterly at variance with every known fact; and the King gave a commission for the arrest and punishment of him, and the persons alleged to be his accomplices. The fact was, that he had escaped from the Tower, and, like others, had fled into Wales. There he remained for some time in concealment, while persecution raged in England, and some more were put to death. Henry Chichesley, successor of Arundel in the see of Canterbury, hotly prosecuted the work of extirpation, as his Constitutions (A.D. 1416) witness; and multitudes of imprisoned Lollards, with long lists of abjurations and of exiles, attest the continued power of the truth, and the relentless wrath of those who ought to have maintained and taught the truth they laboured to suppress. One effect of their wicked perseverance was the discovery of Lord Cobham. Lord Powis, a Welsh nobleman, who had, for four years, assisted in protecting his peer from persecution, now, attracted by the proclamation of a large reward to whomsoever should present him to the King, either "quick or dead," or else weary of incurring danger on account of a religion he did not enjoy, basely brought his outlawed guest to London, and delivered him, bound, in the House of Lords (December 14th, 1417). In that assembly, the sentences of his excommunication and outlawry were again read. He heard them in silence, and, after once more entering the Tower-gate as a prisoner, rendering thanks to God that he was counted worthy to suffer for His name's sake, he prepared for the long-expected martyrdom; calmly expecting the day when, to borrow a prediction of his own, he should be taken up to heaven, like Elijah, in a fiery chariot. On the day appointed, he was led out of the Tower, with his hands bound behind him, placed on a hurdle, and drawn through London. Yet his countenance betrayed neither fear

* Their names are preserved in a royal writ, De pardonatione pro Lollardis, in Rymer, tom. ix., pp. 129, 130.

nor shame as he was dragged through the mire to St. Giles's Field, where a new gallows was erected for the twofold execution. When taken from the hurdle, he fell on his knees, and devoutly prayed Almighty God to forgive his enemies. Then standing up, he looked around, with an air of conscious integrity, on the multitude who had come to see him hanged as a traitor, and exhorted them at some length to follow the laws of God as written in the Scriptures, and to beware of such teachers as they saw to be contrary to Christ in their conversation and living. Then, in obedience to the letter of the law, he was hanged; but the manner of that hanging was so contrived that he should still be burnt to death as a heretic; for all knew him to be innocent of treason. Suspended by chains, he was swung on the gallows, a fire was kindled under him, and he was roasted in the flames, but heard praising God as long as life lasted.*

Chichesley, not less diligent than his predecessor in uprooting heresy, which yet outgrew his labours, imprisoned (A.D. 1421) Thomas Purvey, author of numerous treatises, "gravely and exactly written," on the chief points of doctrine, discipline, and practices of Romanism; and designated "the Library of Lollards, and Glosser upon Wycliffe." But these manuscript instructions found their way into the chamber of the Priest, and to the hearths of lewd men,† despite the searchings of inquisitors. William Tailor, a Priest, after long endeavouring to expound his views in such a manner as might not violently shock the zealots, and after having suffered various acts of discipline, was drawn into controversy; and, being too honest to deny what he believed to be true, was degraded and then burnt (A.D. 1423). Some of the opinions for which he suffered, were precisely those which the Council of Trent afterwards adopted, in order to palliate the absurdity of their system; such, for example, as the distinction between the higher worship (*latria*) which he, as they, denied to images, and the inferior veneration (*dulia*) which he allowed, and they have pretended to be that alone which is rendered to the "mawmets" in their temples. The Bishop of Norwich was second to none in fanaticism that would persecute, even unto death. The records of that diocess during seven years abound in accounts of abjurations, and lists of penitents. There, as elsewhere, the practice seems to have been to imprison, fine, and subject to humiliating public penances, the more active Lollards; and now and then to burn one for the sake of maintaining authority, and spreading terror. William White, a Priest, gave up his benefice, married, preached the Gospel, read good books to the people, and added others by his own pen. He was therefore made an example of, being burnt at Norwich, to the horror and "grief of all the good men of Norfolk" (A.D. 1428). About the same time, Father Abraham, of Colchester, and John Waddon, a Priest, were consumed to ashes. Indeed, several other names might be recorded; but little is known of the circumstances of their martyrdom, and the mere recitation of names would be rather tedious than instructive. But the

* Foxe, Acts and Monuments; Rymeri Fœdera, tom. ix., pp. 119, 129, 193.

† Laymen were so called in common language.

martyrs were often honoured by the multitude, who had revered them for their piety, and beheld their constancy with admiration; and when the Bishop of London had caused a poor Priest, Richard Wiche, to be burned on Tower-Hill, people crowded to the place of martyrdom, raised on it a mound of stones surmounted by a cross, offered up prayers around it, as if the spot had been consecrated by the translation of a saint to glory, and the excitement became so great, and the mortification of the Clergy so profound, that they applied to the King for help, and obtained a writ from His Majesty to the Sheriffs of London and Middlesex, and not to them only, but, because persons from all parts of the country began to join the crowds on Tower-Hill, to all the Sheriffs of England, setting forth the royal desire to abolish idolatry, charging the Londoners with having been guilty of that sin in worshipping the ashes of Richard Wiche; "whereas it is not lawful to worship any manner of person, be he ever so holy, before he is canonized by the Bishop of Rome;" and prohibiting all persons from resorting thither, under pain of being taken and punished as favourers of heretics. Even a word spoken in favour of Richard Wiche, a syllable of censure on the Prelate who sent him to the stake, was to be thus avenged * (A.D. 1440).

The power and arrogance of the Clergy were now raised to the highest pitch. The Bishop of Winchester, made Cardinal against the will of Henry V., and still holding that bishopric contrary to the common law of the realm, and in contempt of the statute *præmunire facias*, had managed, together with the Archbishop of York, to get the government of the infant King Henry VI., after the death of his father, so that England was, for a time, prostrate under ecclesiastical predominance. "The good Duke Humphrey," brother of the deceased King, endeavoured to resist the usurpation and fraudulent practices of the Cardinal; but without success. Accused of heresy, his Duchess was compelled to undergo a shameful penance; and the citizens of London passively saw the aunt of their Sovereign walk through Cheapside thrice as a penitent, carrying a taper in her hand, and then separated from her royal husband, outlawed, and placed in the custody of an appointed keeper in the Isle of Man (A.D. 1440). As for the Duke of Gloucester himself, he was found murdered in his bed, (A.D. 1447,) and his memory was tainted with the reproach of heresy. The tale of Reynold Peacock, Bishop of Chichester, could not be very briefly told; but the summary is, that he entertained some correct views of discipline and doctrine, and desired that the Church in England should be released from some of the bonds imposed thereon by the Bishop of Rome; and that for this offence he was charged with heresy, cited to appear before the Archbishop of Canterbury, and compelled to make a public retractation of his opinions. Notwithstanding this humiliation, he was confined as a prisoner to his house, thence taken to a monastery, *and never heard of more*. And so onward, to the time of the Reformation, persons were commonly burned for heresy, without respect to age or sex, or perished in dungeons. There even seemed to be a thirst for noble

* Foxe, Acts and Monuments.

blood, a pride in outraging the last notions of humanity, an abject submission of all ranks to the terrors of the priesthood. Had it not been so, Henry VII. and the nobles of England would not have allowed Joan Boughton, mother of the Lady Young, an aged and holy woman, for she was upwards of eighty, to have been dragged into Smithfield, and openly burnt to death. Public opinion had no utterance in those days. The Commons, indeed, revered her as a saint. A trembling multitude heard her declare that she feared not the fire, that God loved her, and that angels would attend her spirit into heaven. They wept silently around the stake; treasured in their memory her last prayer, while burning, that God would take her soul into his holy hands; and some of them came, in the dead of the night, to steal away her ashes from the embers (A.D. 1496). Confessions and martyrdoms are no longer described by chroniclers as rare events. A sentence, or even a name, suffices for the record, and the coldness of an incidental note shows that the obduracy of the Priest, and the degradation of England, had become complete; while, on the other hand, the frequency of public penances, public burnings, or secret deaths, confirms the statement of later historians, that the doctrines of Wycliffe continued to spread and to deepen, and serves to fill up the series of evidence that the truth of God is immortal, and the kingdom of Christ a kingdom that cannot be moved.

At this point of our history, the witnesses are nearly put to silence; and almost throughout Europe the priesthood seem to domineer over Sovereigns and people; yet the beginnings and the means of Reformation are established. We have marked those beginnings and observed those means latent in infant institutions and in new principles of social and national existence. Beside the thrones and professorial chairs of Christendom, there now stand ready monitors of independence. Hidden in the walls and buried under the floors of our fathers' violated habitations, lie the Lollards' books; and in the monastic cells and inquisitorial chambers are laid up, in manuscript, the first elements of a new moral science, a divine literature, that shall soon be taught in schools, debated in Parliaments, and, in a yet higher and holier form, proclaimed from pulpits, and poured from the press. Christendom, nearly lifeless, has fallen under the temporary triumph of a Church making her last grand effort after the undisputed sovereignty of mankind, and utter suppression of the Gospel; but we are only in the chill and darkness that precedes the dawn. The morning star is up; and in a subsequent volume, if the Lord will guide the hand that undertakes to write it, we shall hail its appearance, and humbly emulate the gladness of the sons of God who shouted together for joy while He laid down the foundations of a new and beauteous world to be the object of a Redeemer's love.

END OF VOLUME II.

LONDON: PRINTED BY JAMES NICHOLS, HOXTON-SQUARE.

University of California
SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
405 Hilgard Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90024-1388
Return this material to the library
from which it was borrowed.

DUE
OCT 05 1992
MAY 19 1992

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
A 000 039 089 8